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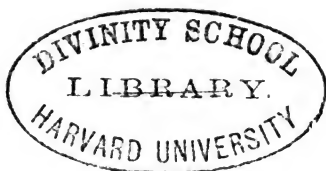
Worcester. July 4. 1855.

WOMAN'S RIGHTS

TRACTS.

BY WENDELL PHILLIPS, THEODORE PARKER, Mrs.
MILL, (OF ENGLAND,) T. W. HIGGINSON,
AND Mrs. C. I. J. NICHOLS.

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S P E E C H
OF
WENDELL PHILLIPS, ESQ.,
AT THE
CONVENTION HELD AT WORCESTER,
OCTOBER 15 AND 16, 1851.

THE following resolutions were under consideration :

1. *Resolved*, That while we would not undervalue other methods, the Right of Suffrage for Women is, in our opinion, the corner-stone of this enterprise, since we do not seek to protect woman, but rather to place her in a position to protect herself.

2. *Resolved*, That it will be woman's fault if, the ballot once in her hand, all the barbarous, demoralizing and unequal laws, relating to marriage and property, do not speedily vanish from the statute-book ; and while we acknowledge that the hope of a share in the higher professions and profitable employments of society is one of the strongest motives to intellectual culture, we know, also, that an interest in political questions is an equally powerful stimulus ; and we see, beside, that we do our best to insure education to an individual, when we put the ballot into his hands ; it being so clearly the interest of the community that one upon whose decisions depend its welfare and safety should both have free access to the best means of education, and be urged to make use of them.

3. *Resolved*, That we do not feel called upon to assert or establish the equality of the sexes, in an intellectual or any other point of view. It is enough for our argument that natural and political justice, and the axioms of English and American liberty, alike determine that rights and burdens — taxation and representation — should be coextensive ; hence women, as individual citizens, liable to punishment for acts which the laws call criminal, or to be taxed in their labor and property for the support of government, have a self-evident and indisputable right, identically the same right that men have, to

a direct voice in the enactment of those laws and the formation of that government.

4. *Resolved*, That the democrat, or reformer, who denies suffrage to women is a democrat only because he was not born a noble, and one of those levellers who are willing to level only down to themselves.

5. *Resolved*, That while political and natural justice accord civil equality to woman ; while great thinkers of every age, from Plato to Condorcet and Mill, have supported their claim ; while voluntary associations, religious and secular, have been organized on this basis ; still, it is a favorite argument against it, that no political community or nation ever existed in which women have not been in a state of political inferiority. But, in reply, we remind our opponents that the same fact has been alleged, with equal truth, in favor of slavery ; has been urged against freedom of industry, freedom of conscience, and the freedom of the press ; none of these liberties having been thought compatible with a well-ordered state, until they had proved their possibility by springing into existence as facts. Besides, there is no difficulty in understanding why the subjection of woman has been a *uniform custom*, when we recollect that we are just emerging from the ages in which *might* has been always right.

6. *Resolved*, That, so far from denying the overwhelming social and civil influence of women, we are fully aware of its vast extent ; aware, with Demosthenes, that "measures which the statesman has meditated a whole year may be overturned in a day by a woman;" and for this very reason we proclaim it the very highest expediency to endow her with full civil rights, since only then will she exercise this mighty influence under a just sense of her duty and responsibility ; the history of all ages bearing witness, that the only safe course for nations is to add open responsibility wherever there already exists unobserved power.

7. *Resolved*, That we deny the right of any portion of the species to decide for another portion, or of any individual to decide for another individual, what is and what is not their "proper sphere;" that the proper sphere for all human beings is the largest and highest to which they are able to attain ; what this is, cannot be ascertained without complete liberty of choice ; woman, therefore, ought to choose for herself what sphere she will fill, what education she will seek, and what employment she will follow ; and not be held bound to accept, in submission, the rights, the education, and the sphere which man thinks proper to allow her.

8. *Resolved*, That we hold these truths to be self-evident : that all men are created equal ; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights ; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness ; that, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed ; and we charge that man with gross dishonesty or ignorance, who shall contend that "men," in the memorable document from which we quote, does not stand for the human race ; that "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," are the "ina-

lienable rights" of *half* only of the human species ; and that, by "the governed," whose consent is affirmed to be the only source of just power, is meant that *half* of mankind only who, in relation to the other, have hitherto assumed the character of *governors*.

9. *Resolved*, That we see no weight in the argument that it is necessary to exclude women from civil life because domestic cares and political engagements are incompatible ; since we do not see the fact to be so in the case of man ; and because, if the incompatibility be real, it will take care of itself, neither men nor women needing any law to exclude them from an occupation when they have undertaken another, incompatible with it. Second, we see nothing in the assertion that women, themselves, do not desire a change, since we assert that superstitious fears, and dread of losing men's regard, smother all frank expression on this point ; and further, if it be their real wish to avoid civil life, laws to keep them out of it are absurd ; no legislator having ever yet thought it necessary to compel people by law to follow their own inclination.

10. *Resolved*, That it is as absurd to deny all women their civil rights because the cares of household and family take up all the time of some, as it would be to exclude the whole male sex from Congress, because some men are sailors, or soldiers, in active service, or merchants, whose business requires all their attention and energies.

WENDELL PHILLIPS, Esq., of Boston, after offering these resolutions, spoke as follows :

In drawing up some of these resolutions, I have used, very freely, the language of a thoughtful and profound article in the *Westminster Review*. It is a review of the proceedings of our recent convention in this city, and states with singular clearness and force the leading arguments for our reform, and the grounds of our claim in behalf of woman.

I rejoice to see so large an audience gathered to consider this momentous subject. It was well described by Mrs. Rose as the most magnificent reform that has yet been launched upon the world. It is the first organized protest against the injustice which has brooded over the character and the destiny of one half of the human race. Nowhere else, under any circumstances, has a demand ever yet been made for the liberties of one whole half of our race. It is fitting that we should pause and consider so remarkable and significant a circumstance ; that we should discuss the question involved with the seriousness and deliberation suit-

able to such an enterprise. It strikes, indeed, a great and vital blow at the whole social fabric of every nation; but this, to my mind, is no argument against it. The time has been when it was the duty of the reformer to show cause why he appeared to disturb the quiet of the world. But during the discussion of the many reforms that have been advocated, and which have more or less succeeded, one after another, — freedom of the lower classes, freedom of food, freedom of the press, freedom of thought, reform in penal legislation, and a thousand other matters, — it seems to me to have been proved conclusively, that government commenced in usurpation and oppression; that liberty and civilization, at present, are nothing else than the fragments of rights which the scaffold and the stake have wrung from the strong hands of the usurpers. Every step of progress the world has made has been from scaffold to scaffold, and from stake to stake. It would hardly be exaggeration to say, that all the great truths relating to society and government have been first heard in the solemn protests of martyred patriotism, or the loud cries of crushed and starving labor. The law has been always wrong. Government began in tyranny and force, began in the feudalism of the soldier and bigotry of the priest; and the ideas of justice and humanity have been fighting their way, like a thunder-storm, against the organized selfishness of human nature. And this is the last great protest against the wrong of ages. It is no argument to my mind, therefore, that the old social fabric of the past is against us.

Neither do I feel called upon to show what woman's proper sphere is. In every great reform, the majority have always said to the claimant, no matter what he claimed, "You are not fit for such a privilege." Luther asked of the Pope liberty for the masses to read the Bible. The reply was, that it would not be safe to trust the common people with the word of God. "Let them try!" said the great reformer; and the history of three centuries of development and purity proclaims the result. They *have* tried; and look around you for the consequences. The lower classes in France claimed their civil rights, — the right to vote, and to a direct representation in the government; but the rich

and lettered classes, the men of cultivated intellects, cried out, "You cannot be made fit." The answer was, "Let us try." That France is not, as Spain, utterly crushed beneath the weight of a thousand years of misgovernment, is the answer to those who doubt the ultimate success of this experiment.

Woman stands now at the same door. She says, "You tell me I have no intellect; give me a chance. You tell me I shall only embarrass politics; let me try." The only reply is the same stale argument that said to the Jews of Europe, "You are fit only to make money; you are not fit for the ranks of the army or the halls of parliament." How cogent the eloquent appeal of Macaulay, — "What right have we to take this question for granted? Throw open the doors of this house of commons, throw open the ranks of the imperial army, before you deny eloquence to the countrymen of Isaiah, or valor to the descendants of the Maccabees." It is the same now with us. Throw open the doors of Congress, throw open those court-houses, throw wide open the doors of your colleges, and give to the sisters of the De Staels and the Martineaus the same opportunities for culture that men have, and let the result prove what their capacity and intellect really are. When, I say, woman has enjoyed, for as many centuries as we have, the aid of books, the discipline of life, and the stimulus of fame, it will be time to begin the discussion of these questions, "What is the intellect of woman?" — "Is it equal to that of man?" Till then, all such discussion is mere beating of the air.

While it is doubtless true that great minds, in many cases, make a way for themselves, spite of all obstacles, yet who knows how many Miltons have died "mute and inglorious"? However splendid the natural endowment, the discipline of life, after all, completes the miracle. The ability of Napoleon — what was it? It grew out of the hope to be Cæsar or Marlborough, out of Austerlitz and Jena, — out of his battle-fields, his throne, and all the great scenes of that eventful life. Open to woman the same scenes, immerse her in the same great interests and pursuits, and, if twenty centuries shall not produce a woman Charlemagne or

Napoleon, fair reasoning will then allow us to conclude that there is some distinctive peculiarity in the intellects of the sexes. Centuries alone can lay any fair basis for argument. I believe that, on this point, there is a shrinking consciousness of not being ready for the battle, on the part of *some* of the stronger sex, as they call themselves; a tacit confession of risk to this imagined superiority, if they consent to meet their sisters in the lecture-hall or the laboratory of science. My proof of it is this: that the mightiest intellects of the race, from Plato down to the present time, some of the rarest minds of Germany, France and England, have successively yielded their assent to the fact that woman is, not perhaps identically, but equally, endowed with man in all intellectual capabilities. It is generally the second-rate men who doubt, — doubt, perhaps, because they fear a fair field :

“ He either fears his fate too much,
Or his deserts are small,
Who fears to put it to the touch,
To gain or lose it all.”

But I wish especially to direct your attention to the precise principle which this movement undertakes to urge upon the community. We do not attempt to settle what shall be the profession, education or employment, of woman. We have not that presumption. What we ask is simply this — what all other classes have asked before: Leave it to woman to choose for herself her profession, her education, and her sphere. We deny to any portion of the species the right to prescribe to any other portion its sphere, its education, or its rights. We deny the right of any individual to prescribe to any other individual his amount of education, or his rights. The sphere of each man, of each woman, of each individual, is that sphere which he can, with the highest exercise of his powers, perfectly fill. The highest act which the human being can do, that is the act which God designed him to do. All that woman asks through this movement is, to be allowed to prove what she can do; to prove it by liberty of choice, by liberty of action, the only means by which it ever can be settled how much

and what she can do. She can reasonably say to us, "I have never fathomed the depths of science; you have taught that it was unwomanly, and have withdrawn from me the means of scientific culture. I have never equalled the eloquence of Demosthenes; but you have never quickened my energies by holding up before me the crown and robe of glory, and the gratitude which I was to win. The tools, now, to him or her who can use them. Welcome me, henceforth, brother, to your arena: and let facts — not theories — settle my capacity, and therefore my sphere."

We are not here to-night to assert that woman will enter the lists and conquer; that she will certainly achieve all that man has achieved; but this we say, "Clear the lists, and let her try." Some reply, "It will be a great injury to feminine delicacy and refinement for woman to mingle in business and politics." I am not careful to answer this objection. Of all such objections, on this and kindred subjects, Mrs. President, I love to dispose in some such way as this: The broadest and most far-sighted intellect is utterly unable to foresee the ultimate consequences of any great social change. Ask yourself, on all such occasions, if there be any element of right and wrong in the question, any principle of clear natural justice that turns the scale. If so, take your part with the perfect and abstract right, and trust God to see that it shall prove the expedient. The questions, then, for me, on this subject, are these: Has God made woman capable — morally, intellectually and physically — of taking this part in human affairs? Then, what God made her able to do, it is a strong argument that he intended she should do. Does our sense of natural justice dictate that the being who is to suffer under laws shall first personally assent to them; that the being whose industry government is to burden should have a voice in fixing the character and amount of that burden? Then, while woman is admitted to the gallows, the jail and the tax-list, we have no right to debar her from the ballot-box. "But to go there will hurt that delicacy of character which we have always thought peculiarly her grace." I cannot help that. Let Him who created her capable of politics, and made it just that she

should have a share in them, see to it that these rights which He has conferred do not injure the being He created. Is it for any human being to trample on the laws of justice and liberty, from an alleged necessity of helping God govern what he has made? I cannot help God govern his world by telling lies, or doing what my conscience deems unjust. How absurd to deem it necessary that any one should do so! When Infinite Wisdom established the rules of right and honesty, he saw to it that justice should be always the highest expediency.

The evil, therefore, that some timid souls fear to the character of woman, from the exercise of her political rights, does not at all trouble me. "Let education form the rational and moral being, and nature will take care of the woman." Neither do I feel at all disturbed by those arguments addressed to us as to the capacity of woman. I know that the humblest man and the feeblest has the same civil rights, according to the theory of our institutions, as the most gifted. It is never claimed that the humblest shall be denied his civil right, provided he be a man. No. Intellect, even though it reach the Alpine height of a Parker, — ay, setting aside the infamy of his conduct, and looking at him only as an instance of intellectual greatness, to the height of a Webster, — gets no tittle of additional civil right, no one single claim to any greater civil privilege than the humblest individual, who knows no more than the first elements of his alphabet, provided that being is a man (I ought to say, a *white* man). Grant, then, that woman is intellectually inferior to man — it settles nothing. She is still a responsible, tax-paying member of civil society. We rest our claim on the great, eternal principle, that taxation and representation must be coëxtensive; that rights and burdens must correspond to each other; and he who undertakes to answer the argument of this convention must first answer the whole course of English and American history for the last hundred and fifty years. No single principle of liberty has been enunciated, from the year 1688 until now, that does not cover the claim of woman. The state has never laid the basis of right upon the distinction of sex; and no reason has ever been given,

except a religious one — that there are in the records of our religion commands obliging us to make woman an exception to our civil theories, and deprive her of that which those theories give her.

Suppose that woman is essentially inferior to man — she still has rights. Grant that Mrs. Norton never could be Byron; that Elizabeth Barrett never could have written *Paradise Lost*; that Mrs. Somerville never could be La Place, nor Sirani have painted the *Transfiguration*. What then? Does that prove they should be deprived of all civil rights? John Smith never will be, never can be, Daniel Webster. Shall he, therefore, be put under guardianship, and forbidden to vote?

Suppose woman, though equal, to differ essentially in her intellect from man — is that any ground for disfranchising her? Shall the Fultons say to the Raphaels, "Because you cannot make steam-engines, therefore you shall not vote"? Shall the Napoleons or the Washingtons say to the Wordsworths or the Herschells, "Because you cannot lead armies and govern states, therefore you shall have no civil rights"?

Grant that woman's intellect be essentially different, even inferior, if you choose; still, while our civilization allows her to hold property, and to be the guardian of her children, she is entitled to such education and to such civil rights — voting, among the rest — as will enable her to protect both her children and her estate. It is easy to indulge in *dilettanti* speculation as to woman's sphere and the female intellect; but leave dainty speculation, and come down to practical life. Here is a young widow; she has children, and ability, if you will let her exercise it, to give them the best advantages of education, to secure them every chance of success in life; or, she has property to keep for them, and no friend to rely on. Shall she leave them to sink in the unequal struggles of life? Shall she trust their all to any adviser money can buy, in order to gratify your taste, and give countenance to your nice theories? or, shall she use all the powers God has given her for those he has thrown upon her protection? If we consult common sense, and leave theories alone, there is but one answer. Such a

one can rightfully claim of society all the civil privileges, and of fashion all such liberty as will best enable her to discharge fully her duties as a mother.

But woman, it is said, may safely trust all to the watchful and generous care of man. She has been obliged to do so hitherto. With what result, let the unequal and unjust legislation of all nations answer. In Massachusetts, lately, a man married an heiress, worth fifty thousand dollars. Dying, about a year after his marriage, he made this remarkably generous and manly will. He left these fifty thousand dollars to her so long as she should remain his widow! (Loud laughter.) These dollars, which he owed entirely to her, which were fairly hers, he left to her, after twelve months' use, on this generous condition, that she should never marry again! Ought a husband to have such unlimited control over the property of his wife, or over the property which they have together acquired? Ought not woman to have a voice in determining what the law shall be in regard to the property of married persons? Often by her efforts, always by her economy, she contributes much to the stock of family wealth, and is therefore justly entitled to a voice in the control and disposal of it. Neither common sense nor past experience encourage her to trust the protection of that right to the votes of men. That

"Mankind is ever weak,
And little to be trusted;
If self the wavering balance strike,
It's rarely right adjusted" —

is true between the sexes, as much as between individuals.

Make the case our own. Is there any man here willing to resign his own right to vote, and trust his welfare and his earnings entirely to the votes of others? Suppose any class of men should condescendingly offer to settle for us our capacity or our calling; to vote for us, to choose our sphere for us; how ridiculously impertinent we should consider it! Yet few have the good sense to laugh at the consummate impertinence with which every bar-room brawler, every third-rate scribb'ler, undertakes to settle the sphere

of the Martineaus and the De Staels! With what gracious condescension little men continue to lecture and preach on "the female sphere" and "female duties"!

This convention does not undertake the task of protecting woman. It contends that, in government, every individual should be endowed, as far as possible, with the means of protecting himself. This is far more the truth when we deal with classes. Every class should be endowed with the power to protect itself. Man has hitherto undertaken to settle what is best for woman, in the way of education, and in the matter of property. He has settled it for her, that her duties and cares are too great to allow her any time to take care of her own earnings, or to take her otherwise legitimate share in the civil government of the country. He has not undertaken to say that the sailor or the soldier, in active service, when he returns from his voyage or his camp, is not free to deposit his vote in the ballot-box. He has not undertaken to say that the manufacturer, whose factories cover whole townships, who is up early and lies down late, who has to borrow the services of scores to help him in the management of his vast estate, — he does not say that such a man cannot get time to study politics, and ought therefore to be deprived of his right to vote with his fellow-citizens. He has not undertaken to say that the lawyer may not vote, though his whole time is spent in the courts, until he knows nothing of what is going on in the streets. O, no! But as for woman, her time *must* be all so entirely filled in taking care of her household, her cares must be so extensive, that neither those of soldiers, nor sailors, nor merchants, can be equal to them; she has not a moment to qualify herself for politics! Woman cannot be spared long enough from the kitchen to put in a vote, though Abbott Lawrence can be spared from the counting-house, though General Gaines or Scott can be spared from the camp, though the Lorings and the Choates can be spared from the courts. This is the argument: Stephen Girard cannot go to Congress; he is too busy; therefore, no *man* ever shall. Because General Scott has gone to Mexico, and cannot be President, therefore no *man* shall be. Because A B is a sailor, gone on a

whaling voyage, to be absent for three years, and cannot vote, therefore no male inhabitant ever shall. Logic how profound! how conclusive! Yet this is the exact reasoning in the case of woman. Take up the newspapers. See the sneers at this movement. "Take care of the children," "Make the clothes," "See that they are mended," "See that the parlors are properly arranged." Suppose we grant it all. Are there no women but housekeepers? no women but mothers? O, yes; many! Suppose we grant that the cares of a household are so heavy that they are greater than the cares of the president of a college, — that he who has the charge of some hundreds of youths is less oppressed with care than the woman with three rooms and two children; that, though President Sparks has time for politics, Mrs. Brown has not. Grant that, and still we claim that you should be true to your theory, and grant to single women those rights which she who is the mistress of a household and mother of a family has no time to exercise.

"Let women vote!" cries one. "Why, wives and daughters might be democrats, while their fathers and husbands were whigs. It would never do. It would produce endless quarrels." And the self-satisfied objector thinks he has settled the question.

But, if the principle be a sound one, why not apply it in a still more important instance? Difference of religion breeds more quarrels than difference in politics. Yet we allow women to choose their own religious creeds, although we thereby run the risk of wives being Episcopalians while their husbands are Methodists, or daughters being Catholics while their fathers are Calvinists. Yet who, this side of Turkey, dare claim that the law should compel women to have no religious creed, or adopt that of their male relatives? Practically, this freedom in religion has made no difficulty; and probably equal freedom in politics would make as little.

It is, after all, of little use to argue these social questions. These prejudices never were reasoned up, and, my word for it, they will never be reasoned down. The freedom of the press, the freedom of labor, the freedom of the race in its lowest classes,

was never argued to success. The moment you can get woman to go out into the highway of life, and show by active valor what God has created her for, that moment this question is settled forever. One solid fact of a woman's making her fortune in trade will teach the male sex what woman's capacity is. I say, therefore, to women, there are two paths before you in this reform: one is, take all the laws have left you, with a confident and determined hand; the other is, cheer and encourage, by your sympathy and aid, those noble women who are willing to be the pioneers in this enterprise. See that you stand up the firm supporters of those bold and fearless ones who undertake to lead their sisters in this movement. If Elizabeth Blackwell, who, trampling under foot the sneers of the other sex, took her maiden reputation in her hand, and walked the hospitals of Europe, comes back the accomplished graduate of them, to offer her services to the women of America, and to prove that woman, equally with man, is qualified to do the duties and receive the honors and rewards of the healing art, see to it, women, that you greet her efforts with your smiles. Hasten to her side, and open your households to her practice. Demand to have the experiment fairly tried, before you admit that, in your sickness and in your dangers, woman may not stand as safely by your bedside as man. If you will but be true to each other, on some of these points, it is in the power of woman to settle, in a great measure, this question. Why ask aid from the other sex at all? Theories are but thin and unsubstantial air against the solid fact of woman mingling with honor and profit in the various professions and industrial pursuits of life. Would women be true to each other, by smoothing the pathway of each other's endeavors, it is in their power to settle one great aspect of this question, without any statute in such case made and provided. I say, TAKE your rights! There is no law to prevent it, in one half of the instances. If the prejudices of the other sex and the supineness of your own prevent it, there is no help for you in the statute-books. It is for you but to speak, and the doors of all medical hospitals are open for the women by whom you make it known that you intend to be served. Let us

have no separate, and therefore necessarily inferior, schools for women. Let us have no poor schools, feebly endowed, where woman must go to gather what help she may from second-rate professors, in one branch of a profession. No! Mothers, daughters, sisters! say to husband, father, brother, "If this life is dear to you, I intend to trust it, in my hour of danger, to a sister's hand. See to it, therefore, you who are the guides of society and heads of those institutions, if you love your mother, sister, wife, daughter, see to it that you provide these chosen assistants of mine the means to become disciplined and competent advisers in that momentous hour, for I will have no other." When you shall say that, Harvard University, and every other university, and every medical institution, will hasten to open their doors. You who long for the admission of woman to professional life and the higher ranks of intellectual exertion, up, and throw into her scale this omnipotent weight of your determination to be served by her, and by no other! In this matter, what you decide is law.

There is one other light in which this subject is to be considered, — the freedom of ballot; and with a few words upon that, I will close these desultory remarks. As there is no use in educating a human being for nothing, so the thing is an impossibility. Horace Mann says, in the letter that has been read here, that he intends to write a lecture on Woman; and I doubt not that he will take the stand which he has always done, that she should be book-taught for some dozen years, and then retire to domestic life, or the school-room. Would he give sixpence for a boy who could only say that he had been shut up for those years in a school? The unfledged youth that comes from college — what is he? He is a man, and has been subjected to seven years' tutoring; but, man though he is, until he has walked up and down the paths of life, until he receives his education in the discipline of the world, in the stimulus of motive, in the hope of gain, in the desire of honor, in the love of reputation, in nine cases out of ten, he has got no education at all. Profess to educate woman for her own amusement! Profess to educate her in science, that she may go

home and take care of her cradle! Teach her the depths of statesmanship and political economy, that she may smile sweetly when her husband comes home! "It is not the education man gets from books," it was well said by your favorite statesman, "but the lessons he learns from life and society, that profit him most highly." "*Le monde est le livre des femmes.*" Of this *book* you deprive her. You give her nothing but man's little printed primers; you make for her a world of dolls, and then complain that she is frivolous. You deprive her of all the lessons of practical out-door life; you deprive her of all the stimulus which the good and great of all nations, all societies, have enjoyed, the world's honors, its gold and its fame, and then you coolly ask of her, "Why are you not as well disciplined as we are?" I know there are great souls who need no stimulus but love of truth and growth, whom mere love of labor allures to the profoundest investigations; but these are the exceptions, not the rule. We legislate, we arrange society for the masses, not the exceptions.

Responsibility is one instrument—a great instrument—of education, both moral and intellectual. It sharpens the faculties. It unfolds the moral nature. It makes the careless prudent, and turns recklessness into sobriety. Look at the young wife suddenly left a widow, with the care of her children's education and entrance into life thrown upon her. How prudent and sagacious she becomes! How fruitful in resources, and comprehensive in her views! How much intellect and character she surprises her old friends with! Look at the statesman bold and reckless in opposition; how prudent, how thoughtful, how timid he becomes, the moment he is in office, and feels that a nation's welfare hangs on his decisions! Woman can never study those great questions that interest and stir most deeply the human mind, until she studies them under the mingled stimulus and check of this responsibility. And, until her intellect has been tested by such questions, studied under such influences, we shall never be able to decide what it is.

One great reason, then, besides its justice, why we would claim the ballot for woman, is this: because the great school of this

people is the jury-box and the ballot-box. De Tocqueville, after travelling in this country, went away with the conviction that, valuable as the jury trial was for the investigation of facts and defence of the citizens, its value in these respects even was no greater than as it was the school of civil education open to all the people. The education of the American citizen is found in his interest in the debates of Congress, — the earnest personal interest with which he seeks to fathom political questions. It is when the mind, profoundly stirred by the momentous stake at issue, rises to its most gigantic efforts, when the great crisis of some national convulsion is at hand, — it is then that strong political excitement lifts the people up in advance of the age, heaves a whole nation on to a higher platform of intellect and morality. Great political questions stir the deepest nature of one half the nation; but they pass far above and over the heads of the other half. Yet, meanwhile, theorists wonder that the first have their whole nature unfolded, and the others will persevere in being dwarfed. Now, this great, world-wide, practical, ever-present education, we claim for woman. Never, until it is granted her, can you decide what will be her ability. Deny statesmanship to woman? What! to the sisters of Elizabeth of England, Isabella of Spain, Maria Theresa of Austria; ay, let me add, of Elizabeth Heyrick, who, when the intellect of all England was at fault, and wandering in the desert of a false philosophy, — when Brougham and Romilly, Clarkson and Wilberforce, and all the other great and philanthropic minds of England, were at fault and at a dead-lock with the West India question and negro slavery, — with the statesman-like intellect of a Quaker woman, wrote out the simple yet potent charm — IMMEDIATE, UNCONDITIONAL EMANCIPATION — which solved the problem, and gave freedom to a race! How noble the conduct of those men! With an alacrity which does honor to their statesmanship, and proves that they recognized the inspired voice when they heard it, they sat down at the feet of that woman-statesman, and seven years under her instruction did more for the settlement of the greatest social question that had ever convulsed England, than had been done in a century, of more or less effort,

before. O, no; you cannot read history, unless you read it upside down, without admitting that woman, cramped, fettered, excluded, degraded as she has been, has yet sometimes, with one ray of her instinctive genius, done more to settle great questions than all the cumbrous intellect of the other sex has achieved.

It is, therefore, on the ground of natural justice, and on the ground again of the highest expediency, and yet again it is because woman, as an immortal and intellectual being, has a right to all the means of education, — it is on these grounds that we claim for her the civil rights and privileges which man enjoys.

I will not enlarge now on another most important aspect of this question, the value of the contemplated change in a physiological point of view. Our dainty notions have made woman such a hot-house plant, that one half the sex are invalids. The mothers of the next generation are invalids. Better that our women, like the German and Italian girls, should labor on the highway, and share in the toil of harvest, than pine and sicken in the in-door and sedentary routine to which our superstition condemns them. But I leave this sad topic for other hands.

One word more. We heard to-day a very profound and eloquent address as to the course which it is most expedient for woman to pursue in regard to the inadequate remuneration extended to her sex. The woman of domestic life receives but about one third the amount paid to a man for similar or far lighter services. The woman of out-door labor has about the same. The best female employments are subject to a discount of some forty or fifty per cent. on the wages paid to males. It is futile, if it were just, to blame individuals for this. We have all been burdened long by a common prejudice and a common ignorance. The remedy is not to demand that the manufacturer shall pay his workmen more, that the employer of domestics shall pay them more. It is not the capitalist's fault. We inveigh against the wealthy capitalist, but it is not exclusively his fault. It is as much the fault of society itself. It is the fault of that timid conservatism, which sets its face like flint against everything new; of a servile press, that knows so well, by personal experience, how

much fools and cowards are governed by a sneer. It is the fault of silly women, ever holding up their idea of what is "*lady-like*," as a Gorgon head to frighten their sisters from earning bread, — themselves, in their folly, the best answer to the weak prejudice they mistake for argument. It is the fault of that pulpit which declares it indecorous in woman to labor, except in certain occupations, and thus crowds the whole mass of working women into two or three employments, making them rivet each other's chains. Do you ask me the reason of the low wages paid for female labor? It is this: There are about as many women as men obliged to rely for bread on their own toil. Man seeks employment anywhere, and of any kind. No one forbids him. If he cannot make a living by one trade, he takes another; and the moment any trade becomes so crowded as to make wages fall, men leave it, and wages will rise again. Not so with woman. The whole mass of women must find employment in two or three occupations. The consequence is, there are more women in each of these than can be employed; they kill each other by competition. Suppose there is as much sewing required in a city as one thousand hands can do. If the tailors could find only five hundred women to sew, they would be obliged to pay them whatever they asked. But let the case be, as it usually is, that there are five thousand women waiting for that work, unable to turn to any other occupation, and doomed to starve if they fail to get a share of that; we see at once that their labor, being a drug in the market, must be poorly paid for. She cannot say, as man would, "Give me so much, or I will seek another trade." She must accept whatever is offered, and often underbid her sister, that she may secure a share. Any article sells cheap, when there is too much of it in the market. Woman's labor is cheap because there is too much of it in the market. All women's trades are overcrowded, because they have only two or three to choose from. But open to her, now, other occupations. Open to her the studio of the artist, — let her enter there; open to her the office practice, at least, of the lawyers, — let her go there; open to her all in-door trades of society, to begin with, and let woman monopolize them.

Take from the crowded and starved ranks of the needle-women of New York some for the arts of design, some for the counter, some to minister in our public libraries, some for our public registries, some to keep merchants' accounts, and some to feel the pulse; and the consequence will be, that, like every other independent laborer, like their male brethren, they may make their own terms, and will be fairly paid for their labor. It is competition in too narrow lists that starves women in our cities; and those lists are drawn narrow by superstition and prejudice.

Woman is ground down, by the competition of her sisters, to the very point of starvation. Heavily taxed, ill paid, in degradation and misery, is it to be wondered at that she yields to the temptation of wealth? It is the same with men; and thus we recruit the ranks of vice by the prejudices of custom and society. We corrupt the whole social fabric, that woman may be confined to two or three employments. How much do we suffer through the tyranny of prejudice! When we penitently and gladly give to the energy and the intellect and the enterprise of woman their proper reward, their appropriate employment, this question of wages will settle itself; and it will never be settled at all until then.

This question is intimately connected with the great social problem, — the vices of cities. You who hang your heads in terror and shame, in view of the advancing demoralization of modern civilized life, and turn away with horror-struck faces, look back now to these social prejudices, which have made you close the avenues of profitable employment in the face of woman, and reconsider the conclusions you have made! Look back, I say, and see whether you are surely right here. Come up with us and argue the question, and say whether this most artificial delicacy, this childish prejudice, on whose Moloch altar you sacrifice the virtue of so many, is worthy the exalted worship you pay it. Consider a moment. From what sources are the ranks of female profligacy recruited? A few mere giddiness hurries to ruin. Their protection would be in that character and sound common sense which a wider interest in practical life would generally

create. In a few, the love of sensual gratification, grown overstrong, because all the other powers are dormant for want of exercise, wrecks its unhappy victim. The medicine for these would be occupation, awaking intellect, and stirring their highest energies. Give any one an earnest interest in life, something to do, something that kindles emulation, and soon the gratification of the senses sinks into proper subordination. It is idle heads that are tempted to mischief: and she is emphatically idle half of whose nature is unemployed. Why does man, so much oftener than woman, surmount a few years or months of sensual gratification, and emerge into a worthier life? It is not solely because the world's judgment is so much harder upon her. Man can immerse himself in business that stirs keenly all his faculties, and thus he smothers passion in honorable cares. An ordinary woman, once fallen, has no busy and stirring life in which to take refuge, where intellect will contend for mastery with passion, and where virtue is braced by high and active thoughts. Passion comes back to the "empty," through "swept and garnished" chambers, bringing with him more devils than before. But, undoubtedly, the great temptation to this vice is the love of dress, wealth and the luxuries it secures. Facts will jostle theories aside. Whether we choose to acknowledge it or not, there are many women, earning two or three dollars a week, who feel that they are as capable as their brothers of earning hundreds, if they could be permitted to exert themselves as freely. Fretting to see the coveted rewards of life forever forbidden them, they are tempted to shut their eyes on the character of the means by which a taste, however short, may be gained of the wealth and luxury they sigh for. Open to man a fair field for his industry, and secure to him its gains, and nine hundred and ninety-nine men out of every thousand will disdain to steal. Open to woman a fair field for her industry, let her do anything her hands find to do, and enjoy her gains, and nine hundred and ninety-nine women out of every thousand will disdain to debase themselves for dress or ease.

Of this great social problem — to cure or lessen the vice of cities — there is no other solution, except what this movement

offers you. It is, to leave woman to choose her own employments for herself, responsible, as we are, to the common Creator, and not to her fellow-man. I exhort you, therefore, to look at this question in the spirit in which I have endeavored to present it to you. It is no fanciful, no superficial movement, based on a few individual tastes, in morbid sympathy with tales of individual suffering. It is a great social protest against the very fabric of society. It is a question which goes down — we admit it, and are willing to meet the issue — goes down beneath the altar at which you worship, goes down beneath this social system in which you live. And it is true — no denying it — that, if we are right, the doctrines preached from New England pulpits are wrong; it is true that all this affected horror at woman's deviation from her sphere is a mistake, — a mistake fraught with momentous consequences. Understand us. We blink no fair issue. We throw down the gauntlet. We have counted the cost; we know the yoke and burden we assume. We know the sneers, the lying frauds of misstatement and misrepresentation, that await us. We have counted all; and it is but the dust in the balance and the small dust in the measure, compared with the inestimable blessing of doing justice to one half of the human species, of curing this otherwise immedicable wound, stopping this overflowing fountain of corruption, at the very source of civilized life. Truly, it is the great question of the age. It looks all others out of countenance. It needs little aid from legislation. Specious objections, after all, are not arguments. We know we are right. We only ask an opportunity to argue the question, to set it full before the people, and then leave it to the intellects and the hearts of our country, confident that the institutions under which we live, and the education which other reforms have already given to both sexes, have created men and women capable of solving a problem even more difficult and meeting a change even more radical, than this.

APPENDIX.

CALL FOR THE FIRST WOMAN'S RIGHTS CONVENTION.

A CONVENTION will be held at Worcester, Mass., on the twenty-third and twenty-fourth of October next (agreeably to appointment by a preliminary meeting held at Boston, on the thirtieth of May last), to consider the great question of Woman's Rights, Duties and Relations; and the men and women of our country who feel sufficient interest in the subject to give an earnest thought and effective effort to its rightful adjustment, are invited to meet each other in free conference, at the time and place appointed.

The upward tending spirit of the age, busy in a hundred forms of effort for the world's redemption from the sins and sufferings which oppress it, has brought this one, which yields to none in importance and urgency, into distinguished prominence. One half of the race are its immediate objects, and the other half are as deeply involved, by that absolute unity of interest and destiny which nature has established between them.

The neighbor is near enough to involve every human being in a general equality of rights and community of interests; but, men and women, in their reciprocities of love and duty, are one flesh and one blood—mother, wife, sister and daughter, come so near the heart and mind of every man that they must be either his blessing or his bane. Where there is such mutuality of interests, such an interlinking of life, there can be no real antagonism of position and action. The sexes should not, for any reason or by any chance, take hostile attitudes towards each other, either in the apprehension or amendment of the wrongs which exist in their necessary relations; but they should harmonize in opinion and

coöperate in effort, for the reason that they must unite in the ultimate achievement of the desired reformation.

Of the many points now under discussion and demanding a just settlement, the general question of Woman's Rights and Relations comprehends these: Her EDUCATION, *Literary, Scientific and Artistic*; — Her AVOCATIONS, *Industrial, Commercial and Professional*; — Her INTERESTS, *Pecuniary, Civil and Political*; in a word — Her RIGHTS as an *Individual*, and her FUNCTIONS as a *Citizen*.

No one will pretend that all these interests, embracing, as they do, all that is not merely animal in a human life, are rightly understood or justly provided for in the existing social order. Nor is it any more true that the constitutional differences of the sexes, which should determine, define, and limit the resulting differences of office and duty, are adequately comprehended and practically observed.

Woman has been condemned, for her greater delicacy of physical organization, to inferiority of intellectual and moral culture, and to the forfeiture of great social, civil and religious privileges. In the relation of marriage she has been ideally annihilated, and actually enslaved in all that concerns her personal and pecuniary rights; and even in widowhood and single life, she is oppressed with such limitation and degradation of labor and avocation as clearly and cruelly mark the condition of a disabled caste. But, by the inspiration of the Almighty, the beneficent spirit of reform is roused to the redress of these wrongs. The tyranny which degrades and crushes wives and mothers sits no longer lightly on the world's conscience; the heart's home-worship feels the stain of stooping at a dishonored altar. Manhood begins to feel the shame of muddying the springs from which it draws its highest life; and womanhood is everywhere awakening to assert its divinely chartered rights, and to fulfil its noblest duties. It is the spirit of reviving truth and righteousness which has moved upon the great deep of the public heart and aroused its redressing justice; and, through it, the providence of God is vindicating the order and appointments of his creation.

The signs are encouraging; the time is opportune. Come, then, to this Convention. It is your duty, if you are worthy of your age and country. Give the help of your best thought to separate the light from the darkness. Wisely give the protection of your name and the benefit of your efforts to the great work of settling the principles, devising the method, and achieving the success of this high and holy movement.

MASSACHUSETTS.

Lucy Stone,
Wm. H. Channing,
Harriet K. Hunt,
A. Bronson Alcott,
Nathaniel Barney,
Eliza Barney,
Wendell Phillips,
Ann Greene Phillips,
Adin Ballou,
Anna Q. T. Parsons,
Mary H. L. Cabot.

B. S. Treanor,
Mary M. Brooks,
T. W. Higginson,
Mary E. Higginson,
Emily Winslow,
R. Waldo Emerson,
William L. Garrison,
Helen E. Garrison,
Charles F. Hovey,
Sarah Earle,
Abby K. Foster,

Dr. — Rogers,
Eliza F. Taft,
Dr. A. C. Taft,
Charles K. Whipple
Mary Bullard,
Emma C. Goodwin,
Abby Price,
Thankful Southwick,
Eliza J. Kenney,
Louisa M. Sewall,
Sarah Southwick.

RHODE ISLAND

Sarah H. Whitman,
Thomas Davis,
Paulina W. Davis,
Joseph A. Barker,

Sarah Brown,
Elizabeth Chase,
Mary Clarke,
John L. Clarke,

George Clarke,
Mary Adams,
George Adams.

NEW YORK.

Gerrit Smith,
Nancy Smith,
Elizabeth C. Stanton,
Catharine Wilkinson,
Samuel J. May,
Charlotte C. May,

Charlotte G. Coffin,
Mary G. Taber,
Elizabeth S. Miller,
Elizabeth Russell,
Stephen Smith,
Rosa Smith,

Joseph Savage,
L. N. Fowler,
Lydia Fowler,
Sarah Smith,
Charles D. Miller.

PENNSYLVANIA.

William Elder,
Sarah Elder,
Sarah Tyndale,
Warner Justice,
Huldah Justice,
William Swisshelm,

Jane G. Swisshelm,
Charlotte Darlington,
Simon Barnard,
Lucretia Mott,
James Mott,
W. S. Pierce,

Myra Townsend,
Mary Grew,
Sarah Lewis,
Sarah Pugh,
Hannah Darlington,
Sarah D. Barnard.

MARYLAND.

Mrs. Eliza Stewart.

OHIO.

Elizabeth Wilson,
Mary A. Johnson,
Oliver Johnson,

Mary Cowles,
Maria L. Giddings,
Jane Elizabeth Jones,

Benjamin S. Jones,
Lucius A. Hine,
Sylvia Cornell.

A SERMON
OF THE
PUBLIC FUNCTION OF WOMAN,
PREACHED AT THE MUSIC-HALL, BOSTON

MARCH 27, 1853.

BY THEODORE PARKER.

PSALM 144 : 12. — "That our daughters may be as corner-stones."

LAST Sunday I spoke of the Domestic Function of Woman, what she may do for the higher development of the human race at home. To-day, I ask your attention to a sermon of the Ideal Public Function of Woman, and the Economy thereof, in the higher development of the Human Race.

The domestic function of woman, as a housekeeper, wife and mother, does not exhaust her powers. Woman's function, like charity, begins at home; then, like charity, goes everywhere. To make one half of the human race consume all their energies in the functions of housekeeper, wife and mother, is a monstrous waste of the most precious material that God ever made.

I. In the present constitution of society, there are some unmarried women, to whom the domestic function is little, or is nothing; women who are not mothers, not wives, not housekeepers. I mean, those who are permanently unmarried. It is a great defect in the Christian civilization, that so many women and men are never married. There may be three women in a thousand to whom marriage would be disagreeable, under any

possible circumstances; perhaps thirty more to whom it would be disagreeable, under the actual circumstances, in the present condition of the family and the community. But there is a large number of women who continue unmarried for no reason in their nature, from no conscious dislike of the present domestic and social condition of mankind, and from no disinclination to marriage under existing circumstances. This is a deplorable evil — alike a misfortune to man and to woman. The Catholic church has elevated celibacy to the rank of a theological virtue, consecrating an unnatural evil; on a small scale, the results thereof are writ in the obscene faces of many a priest, false to his human nature, while faithful to his priestly vow; and on a large scale, in the vice, the infamy and degradation of woman, in almost all Catholic lands.

The classic civilization of Greece and Rome had the same vice with the Christian civilization. Other forms of religion have sought to get rid of this evil by polygamy; and thereby they degraded woman still further. The Mormons are repeating the same experiment, based not on philanthropy, but on tyranny, and are still further debasing woman under their feet. In classic and in Christian civilization alone, has there been a large class of women permanently unmarried — not united or even subordinated to man in the normal marriage of one to one, or in the abnormal conjunction of one to many. This class of unmarried women is increasing in all Christian countries, especially in those that are old and rich.

Practically speaking, to this class of women the domestic function is very little; to some of them, it is nothing at all. I do not think that this condition is to last, — marriage is writ in the soul of man, as in his body, — but it indicates a transition, it is a step forward. Womankind is advancing from that period when every woman was a slave, and marriage of some sort was guaranteed to every woman, because she was dependent on man; I say, woman is advancing from that, to a state of independence, where woman shall not be subordinated to man, but the two coordinated together.

The evil that I deplore is transient in its nature, and God grant it may soon pass away!

II. That is not all. For the housekeeper, the wife and the mother, the domestic is not the only function; it is not function enough for the woman, — for the human being, — more than it would be function enough for the father, for the man. After women have done all which pertains to housekeeping as a trade, to housekeeping as one of the fine arts, in their relation as wife and mother, — after they have done all for the order of the house, for the order of the husband, and the order of the children, — they have still energies to spare — a reserved power for yet other work. There are three classes of women.

First, domestic Drudges, who are wholly taken up in the material details of their housekeeping, husband-keeping, child-keeping. Their housekeeping is a trade, and no more; and, after they have done that, there is no more which they can do. In New England it is a small class, getting less every year.

Next, there are domestic Dolls, wholly taken up with the vain show which delights the eye and the ear. They are ornaments of the estate. Similar toys, I suppose, will one day be more cheaply manufactured at Paris and Nürnberg, at Frankfort-on-the-Maine, and other toy-shops of Europe, out of wax and papier-maché, and sold in Boston at the haberdasher's, by the dozen. These ask nothing beyond their function as dolls, and hate all attempts to elevate womankind.

But there are domestic women, who order a house, and are not mere drudges, — adorn it, and are not mere dolls, but women. Some of these — a great many of them — conjoin the useful of the drudge and the beautiful of the doll into one womanhood, and have a great deal left besides. They are not wholly taken up with their function as housekeeper, wife and mother.

In the progress of mankind, and the application of masculine science to what was once only feminine work, — whereby so much time is saved from the wheel and the loom, the oven and the spit with the consequent increase of riches, the saving of time, and the

intellectual education which comes in consequence thereof, — this class of women is continually enlarging. With us in New England, — in all the north, — it is a very large class.

Well, what shall these domestic women do with their spare energies and superfluous power? Once, a malicious proverb said, "The shoemaker must not go beyond his last." Every shoemaker looks on that proverb with appropriate contempt. He is a shoemaker; but he was a man first, a shoemaker next. Shoemaking is an accident of his manhood, not manhood an accident of his shoemaking. You know what haughty scorn the writer of the apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus pours out on every farmer, "who glorieth in the goad," every carpenter and blacksmith, every jeweller and potter. They shall not be sought for, says this aristocrat, in the public councils; they shall not sit high in the congregation; they shall not sit in the judges' seat, nor understand the sentence of judgment; they cannot declare justice. Aristotle and Cicero thought no better of the merchants; they were only busy in trading. Miserable people! quoth these great men; what have they to do with affairs of state — merchants, mechanics, farmers? It is only for kings, nobles, and famous rich men, who do no business, but keep slaves! Still, a great many men at this day have just the same esteem for women that those haughty persons of whom I have spoken had for mechanics and for merchants. A great many sour proverbs there are, which look the same way. But, just now, such is the intellectual education of women of the richer class in all our large towns, that these sour proverbs will not go down so well as of old. Even in Boston, spite of the attempts of the city government to prevent the higher public education of women, — diligently persisted in for many years, — the young women of wealthy families get a better education than the young men of wealthy families do; and that fact is going to report itself presently. The best-educated young men are commonly poor men's sons; but the best educated young women are quite uniformly rich men's daughters.

A well-educated young woman, fond of Goethe, and Dante, and Shakspeare, and Cervantes, marrying an ill-educated young man,

who cares for nothing but his horse, his cigar and his bottle; who only knows how to sleep after dinner, a "great heap of husband," curled up on the sofa, and in the evening can only laugh at a play, and not understand the Italian words of an opera, which his wife knows by heart; she, I say, marrying him, will not accept the idea that he is her natural lord and master; she cannot look up to him, but rather down. The domestic function does not consume all her time or talent. She knows how to perform much of her household work, as a manufacturer weaves cotton, or spins hemp, or forges iron, with other machinery, by other hands. She is the housekeeping head; and after she has kept house as wife and as mother, and has done all, she has still energies to spare.

That is a large class of women; it is a great deal larger than men commonly think it is. It is continually enlarging, and you see why. When all manufactures were domestic, — when every garment was made at home, every web wove at home, every thread spun at home, every fleece dyed at home, — when the husband provided the wool or the sheepskin, and the wife made it a coat, — when the husband brought home a sack of corn on a mule's back, and the wife pounded it in a mortar, or ground it between two stones, as in the Old Testament, — then the domestic function might well consume all the time of a very able-headed woman. But now-a-days, when so much work is done abroad, — when the flour-mills of Rochester and Boston take the place of the pestle and mortar, and the hand-mill of the Old Testament, — when Lowell and Lawrence are two enormous Old Testament women, spinning and weaving year out and year in, day and night both, — when so much of woman's work is done by the butcher and the baker, by the tailor and the cook and the gas-maker, and she is no longer obliged to dip or mould with her own hands every handle that "goeth not out by night," as in the Old Testament woman's housekeeping, — you see how very much of woman's time is left for other functions. This will become yet more the case. Ere long, a great deal of lofty science will be applied to housekeeping, and work be done by other than human hands in the house, as out of it. And accordingly, you see, that the class of women not

wholly taken up by the domestic function will get larger and larger.

III. Then, there is a third class of women, who have no taste and no talent for the domestic function. Perhaps these are exceptional women; some of them exceptional by redundancy; they have talents not needed in this function; others are exceptional by defect; with only a common talent, they have none for house-keeping. It is as cruel a lot to set these persons to such work as it would be to take a born sailor and make him a farmer; or to take a man who is born to drive oxen, delights to give the kine fodder, and has a genius for it, and shut him up in the fore-castle of a ship. Who would think of making Jenny Lind nothing but a housekeeper? or of devoting Madame de Stael or Miss Dix wholly to that function? or a dozen other women that any man can name?

IV. Then there is another class of women,—those who are not married yet, but are to be married. They, likewise, have spare time on their hands, which they know not what to do with. Women of this latter class have sometimes asked me what there was for them to do. I could not tell.

All these four put together make up a large class of women, who need some other function beside the domestic. What shall it be? In the middle ages, when the Catholic church held its iron hand over the world, these women went into the church. The permanently unmarried, getting dissatisfied, became nuns; often calling that a virtue which was only a necessity,—making a religious principle out of an involuntary measure. Others voluntarily went thither. The attempt is making anew in England, by some of the most pious people, to revive the scheme. It failed a thousand years ago, and the experiment brought a curse on man. It will always fail; and it ought to fail. Human nature cries out against it.

Let us look, and see what women may do here.

First, there are intellectual pursuits, devotion to science, art, literature, and the like.

Well, in the first place, that is not popular. Learned women are met with ridicule; they are bid to mend their husband's garments, or their own; they are treated with scorn. Foolish young man number one, in a liquor-shop, of a morning, knocks off the ashes from the end of his cigar, and says to foolish young man number two, who is taking soda to wash off the effect of last night's debauch, or preparing for a similar necessity to-morrow morning, in the presence of foolish young man number three, four, five, six, and so on, indefinitely, "I do not like learned young women; they puzzle me." So they do; puzzle him very much. I once heard a foolish young man, full of self-conceit and his father's claret, say, "I had rather have a young woman ask me to waltz, than to explain an allusion in Dante." Very likely; he had studied waltzing, and not Dante. And his mother, full of conceit and her own hyson, said, "I perfectly agree with you. My father said that women had nothing to do with learning." Accordingly, he gave her none, and that explained the counsel.

Then, too, foolish men, no longer young, say the same thing, and seek to bring down their wives and daughters to their own poor-mediocrity of wit and inferiority of culture.

I say, this intellectual calling is not popular. I am sorry it is not; but, even if it were, it is not wholly satisfactory; it suits but a few. In the present stage of human development, there are not many men who are satisfied with a merely intellectual calling; they want something practical, as well as speculative. There are a thousand practical shoemakers to every speculative botanist. It will be so for many years to come. There are ten thousand carpenters to a single poet or philosopher who dignifies his nature with song or with science. See how dissatisfied our most eminent intellectual men become with science and literature. A professor of Greek is sorry he was not a surveyor or engineer; the president of a college longs to be a member of congress; the most accomplished scholars, historians, romancers, — they wish to be

collectors at Boston, consuls at Liverpool, and the like; longing for some practical calling, where they can make their thought a thing. Of the intellectual men whom I know, I can count on the fingers of a single hand all that are satisfied with pure science, pure art, pure literature.

Woman, like man, wants to make her thought a thing; at least, wants things to work her pattern of thought upon. Still, as the world grows older, and wiser, and better, more persons will find an abiding satisfaction in these lofty pursuits. I am rejoiced to see women thus attracted thitherward. Some women there are who find an abiding satisfaction in literature; it fills up their leisure. I rejoice that it is so.

Then there are, next, the various philanthropies of the age. In these, the spare energies of woman have always found a congenial sphere. It is amazing to see how woman's charity, which "never faileth," palliates the injustice of man, which never has failed yet. Men fight battles; women heal the wounds of the sick:

"Forgot are hatred, wrongs, and fears;
The plaintive voice alone she hears, —
Sees but the dying man,"

and does not ask if foe or friend. Messrs. Pinchem & Peelem organize an establishment, wherein the sweat and tears and blood of the poor turn the wheels; every pivot and every shaft rolls on quivering human flesh. The wealthy capitalists,

"Half ignorant, they turn an easy wheel,
Which sets sharp racks at work, to pinch and peel."

The wives and daughters of the wealthy house go out to "undo the heavy burdens, and let the oppressed go free;" to heal the sick and teach the ignorant, whom their fathers, their husbands, their lovers, have made sick, oppressed, and ignorant. Ask Manchester, in Old England and in New, if this is not so; ask London, ask Boston.

The moral, affectional, and religious feelings of woman fit her

for this work. Her patience, her gentleness, her power to conciliate, her sympathy with man, her trust in God, beautifully prepare her for this; and, accordingly, she comes in the face of what man calls justice as an angel of mercy; before his hate as an angel of love; between his victim and his selfishness with the self-denial of Paul and the self-sacrifice of Jesus. Look at any village in New England, and in Old England, at the Sacs and Foxes, at the Hottentots and the Esquimaux; it is the same thing; it is so in all ages, in all climes, in all stages of civilization, in all ranks of society, — the highest and the lowest, — in all forms of religion, all sects of Christianity. It has been so from Dorcas, in the Acts of the Apostles, who made coats and garments for the poor, down to Miss Dix, in our day, who visits jails and houses of correction, and leads Mr. Fillmore to let Capt. Drayton out of jail, where he was placed for the noblest act of his life.

But these philanthropies are not enough for the employment of women; and if all the spare energies of womankind were set to this work, — to palliate the consequences of man's injustice, — it would not be exactly the work which woman wants. There are some women who take no special interest in this. For woman is not all philanthropy, though very much; she has other faculties which want to be developed besides the heart to feel. Still more, that is not the only thing which mankind wants. We need the justice which removes causes, as well as the charity that palliates effects; and woman, standing continually between the victim and the sabre which would cleave him through, is not performing her only function, not her highest; high as that is, it is not her highest. If the feminine swallow drives away the flies from a poor fox struggling for life, another set of flies light upon him, and suck every remaining drop of blood out of his veins, as in the old fable. Besides, if the fox finds that a womanly swallow comes to drive off the flies, he depends on her wing and not on his own brush, and becomes less of a fox. If a miser, or any base man, sees that a woman constantly picks up the man whom he knocks down with the left hand of Usury or the right hand of Rum, he will go on with his extortion or his grog, because, he says, "I should have

done the man harm, but a woman picked him up, and money comes into my pocket, and no harm to the man!" The evils of society would become worse and worse, just as they are increased by indiscriminate alms-giving. That is not enough.

Then there are various practical works left by common consent to woman.

First, there is domestic service, woman working as an appendage to some household; a hired hand, or a hired head, to help the housekeeper.

Then there is mechanical labor, in a factory, or a shop; spinning, weaving, setting type, binding books, making shoes, coloring maps, and a hundred other things.

Next, there is trade, in a small way, from the basket-woman with her apples at every street-corner, up to the confectioner and haberdasher, with their well-filled shops. In a few retail shops which venture to brave popular opinion, woman is employed at the counter.

As a fourth thing, there is the business of public and private teaching, in various departments. All these are well; they are unavoidable, they are absolutely necessary; they furnish employment to many women, and are a blessed resource.

I rejoice that the field-work of the farmer is not done by woman's hand in the free portions of America. It imbrutes women in Ireland, in France, and in Spain. I am glad that the complicated machinery of life furnishes so much more work for the light and delicate hand of woman. But I confess I mourn that where her work is as profitable as man's, her pay is not half so much. A woman who should teach a public school well would be paid four or six dollars a week; while a man, who should teach no better, would be paid two, three, four, or six times that sum. It is so in all departments of woman's work that I am acquainted with.

These employments are very well, but still they are not enough.

Rich women do not engage in these callings. For rich women

there is no profession left except marriage. After school-time, woman has nothing to do till she is married; I mean, almost nothing, — nothing that is adequate. Accordingly, she must choose betwixt a husband and nothing; and, sometimes, that is choosing between two nothings. There are spare energies which seek employment before marriage, and after marriage.

These callings are not all that the race of woman needs; not all that her human nature requires. She has the same human nature which man has, and, of course, the same natural human rights. Woman's natural right for its rightfulness does not depend on the bodily or mental power to assert and to maintain it, — on the great arm or on the great head; it depends only on human nature itself, which God made the same in the frailest woman as in the biggest giant.

If woman is a human being, first, she has the Nature of a human being; next, she has the Right of a human being; third, she has the Duty of a human being. The Nature is the capacity to possess, to use, to develop, and to enjoy every human faculty; the Right is the right to enjoy, develop, and use every human faculty; and the Duty is to make use of the Right, and make her human nature human history. She is here to develop her human nature, enjoy her human rights, perform her human duty. Womankind is to do this for herself, as much as mankind for himself. A woman has the same human nature that a man has; the same human rights, to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; the same human duties; and they are as unalienable in a woman as in a man.

Each man has the natural right to the normal development of his nature, so far as it is general-human, neither man nor woman, but human. Each woman has the natural right to the normal development of her nature, so far as it is general-human, neither woman nor man. But each man has also a natural and unalienable right to the normal development of his peculiar nature as man, where he differs from woman. Each woman has just the same natural and unalienable right to the normal development of

her peculiar nature as woman, and not man. All that is undeniable.

Now see what follows. Woman has the same individual right to determine her aim in life, and to follow it; has the same individual rights of body and of spirit, — of mind and conscience, and heart and soul; the same physical rights, the same intellectual, moral, affectional and religious rights, that man has. That is true of womankind as a whole; it is true of Jane, Ellen and Sally, and each special woman that can be named.

Every person, man or woman, is an integer, an individual, a whole person; and also a portion of the race, and so a fraction of humankind. Well, the rights of individualism are not to be possessed, developed, used and enjoyed, by a life in solitude, but by joint action. Accordingly, to complete and perfect the individual man or woman, and give each an opportunity to possess, use, develop and enjoy these rights, there must be concerted and joint action; else individuality is only a possibility, not a reality. So the individual rights of woman carry with them the same domestic, social, ecclesiastical and political rights, as those of man.

The Family, Community, Church and State, are four modes of action which have grown out of human nature in its historical development; they are all necessary for the development of mankind; machines which the human race has devised, in order to possess, use, develop and enjoy their rights as human beings, their rights also as men.

These are just as necessary for the development of woman as of man; and, as she has the same nature, right and duty, as man, it follows that she has the same right to use, shape and control, these four institutions, for her general human purpose and for her special feminine purpose, that man has to control them for his general human purpose and his special masculine purpose. All that is as undeniable as anything in metaphysics or mathematics.

So, then, woman has the same natural rights as man. In domestic affairs, she is to determine her own sphere as much as man; and say where her function is to begin, when it shall begin, with

whom it shall begin; where it shall end, when it shall end, and what it shall comprise.

Then she has the same right to freedom of industry that man has. I do not believe that the hard callings of life will ever suit woman. It is not little boys who go out as lumberers, but great men, with sinewy, brawny arms. I doubt that laborious callings, like navigation, engineering, lumbering and the like, will ever be agreeable to woman. Her feminine body and feminine spirit naturally turn away from such occupations. I have seen women gathering the filth of the streets in Liverpool, sawing stone in a mason's yard in Paris, carrying earth in baskets on their heads for a railway embankment at Naples; but they were obviously out of place, and only consented to this drudgery when driven by Poverty's iron whip. But there are many employments in the departments of mechanical work, of trade, little and extended, where woman could go, and properly go. Some women have a good deal of talent for trade, — this in a small way, that on the largest scale. Why should not they exercise their commercial talents in competition with man? Is it right for woman to be a domestic manufacturer in the family of Solomon or Priam, and of every thrifty husband, and wrong for her to be a public manufacturer, on her own account? She might spin when the motive-power was a wheel-pin of wood in her hand, — may she not use the Merrimack and the Connecticut for her wheel-pin? or must she be only the manufacturing servant of man, — never her own master?

Much of the business of education already falls to the hands of woman. In the last twenty years, there has been a great progress in the education of women, in Massachusetts, in all New England. The high schools for girls — and, still better, those for girls and boys — have been of great service. Almost all the large towns of this commonwealth have honored themselves with these blessed institutions; in Boston, only the daughters of the rich can possess such an education as hundreds of noble girls long to acquire. With this enhancement of culture, women have been continually rising higher and higher as teachers. The State Nor-

mal Schools have helped in this movement. It used to be thought that only an able-bodied man could manage the large boys of a country or a city school. Even he was sometimes thrust out at the door or the window of "his noisy mansion," by his rough pupils. An able-headed woman has commonly succeeded better than men merely able-bodied. She has tried conciliation rather than violence, and appealed to something a little deeper than aught which force could ever touch. The women-teachers are now doing an important work for the elevation of their race and all human kind. But it is commonly thought woman must not engage in the higher departments thereof. I once knew a woman, wife and mother and housekeeper, who taught the severest disciplines of our highest college, and instructed young men while she rocked the cradle with her foot, and mended garments with her hands, — one of the most accomplished scholars of New England. Not long ago, the daughter of a poor widowed seamstress was seen reading the Koran in Arabic. There was but one man in the town who could do the same, and he was a "Learned Blacksmith." Women not able to teach in these things! He must be rather a confident professor who thinks a woman cannot do what he can. I rejoice at the introduction of women into common schools, academies and high schools; and I thank God that the man who has done so much for public education in Massachusetts is presently to be the head of a college in Ohio, where women and men are to study together, and where a woman is to be professor of Latin and Natural History. These are good signs.

The business of public lecturing, also, is quite important in New England, and I am glad to see that woman presses into that, — not without success.

The work of conducting a journal, daily, weekly, or quarterly, woman proves that she can attend to quite as decently, and as strongly, too, as most men.

Then there are what are called the Professions — Medicine, Law and Theology.

The profession of medicine seems to belong peculiarly to woman by nature; part of it, exclusively. She is a nurse, and half a

doctor, by nature. It is quite encouraging that medical schools are beginning to instruct women, and special schools get founded for the use of women; that sagacious men are beginning to employ women as their physicians. Great good is to be expected from that.

As yet, I believe no woman acts as a lawyer. But I see no reason why the profession of law might not be followed by women as well as by men. He must be rather an uncommon lawyer who thinks no feminine head could compete with him. Most lawyers that I have known are rather mechanics at law than attorneys or scholars at law; and, in the mechanical part, woman could do as well as man, — could be as good a conveyancer, could follow precedents as carefully, and copy forms as nicely. And, in the higher departments of legal work, they who have read the plea which Lady Alice Lille made in England, when she could not speak by attorney, must remember there is some eloquence in woman's tongue, which courts find it rather hard to resist. I think her presence would mend the manners of the court, — of the bench, not less than of the bar.

In the business of theology, I could never see why a woman, if she wished, should not preach, as well as men. It would be hard, in the present condition of the pulpit, to say she had not intellect enough for *that*! I am glad to find, now and then, women preachers, and rejoice at their success. A year ago, I introduced to you the Reverend Miss Brown, educated at an Orthodox theological seminary; you smiled at the name of *Reverend Miss*. She has since been invited to settle by several congregations, of unblemished orthodoxy; and has passed on, looking further.

It seems to me that woman, by her peculiar constitution, is better qualified to teach religion than any merely intellectual discipline. The Quakers have always recognized the natural right of woman to perform the same ecclesiastical function as man. At this day, the most distinguished preacher of that denomination is a woman, who adorns her domestic calling as housekeeper, wife and mother, with the same womanly dignity and sweetness which mark her public deportment.

If woman had been consulted, it seems to me theology would have been in a vastly better state than it is now. I do not think that any woman would ever have preached the damnation of babies new-born; and "hell, paved with the skulls of infants not a span long," would be a region yet to be discovered in theology. A celibate monk — with God's curse writ on his face, which knew no child, no wife, no sister, and blushed that he had a mother — might well dream of such a thing. He had been through the preliminary studies. Consider the ghastly attributes which are commonly put upon God in the popular theology; the idea of infinite wrath, of infinite damnation, and total depravity, and all that. Why, you could not get a woman, that had intellect enough to open her mouth, to preach these things anywhere. Women *think* they think that they believe them; but they do not. Celibate priests, who never knew marriage, or what paternity was, who thought woman was a "pollution," — they invented these ghastly doctrines; and when I have heard the Athanasian Creed and the Dies Iræ chanted by monks, with the necks of bulls and the lips of donkeys, — why, I have understood where the doctrine came from, and have felt the appropriateness of their braying out the damnation hymns; — woman could not do it. We shut her out of the choir, out of the priest's house, out of the pulpit; and then the priest, with unnatural vows, came in, and taught these "doctrines of devils." Could you find a woman who would read to a congregation, as words of truth, Jonathan Edwards' Sermon on a Future State, — "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," "The Justice of God in the Damnation of Sinners," "Wrath upon the Wicked to the uttermost," "The Future Punishment of the Wicked," and other things of that sort? Nay, can you find a worthy woman, of any considerable culture, who will read the fourteenth chapter of Numbers, and declare that a true picture of the God she worships? Only a she-dragon could do it, in our day.

The popular theology leaves us nothing feminine in the character of God. How could it be otherwise, when so much of the popular theology is the work of men, who thought woman was a "pollution," and barred her out of all the high places of the church?

If women had had their place in ecclesiastical teaching, I doubt that the "Athanasian Creed" would ever have been thought a "symbol" of Christianity. The pictures and hymns which describe the last judgment are a protest against the exclusion of woman from teaching in the church. "I suffer not a woman to teach, but to be in silence," said a writer in the New Testament. The sentence has brought manifold evil in its train.

So much for the employments of women.

By nature, woman has the same political rights that man has, — to vote, to hold office, to make and administer laws. These she has as a matter of right. The strong hand and the great head of man keep her down; nothing more. In America, in Christendom, woman has no political rights, is not a citizen in full; she has no voice in making or administering the laws, none in electing the rulers or administrators thereof. She can hold no office, — cannot be committee of a primary school, overseer of the poor, or guardian to a public lamp-post. But any man, with conscience enough to keep out of jail, mind enough to escape the poor-house, and body enough to drop his ballot into the box, he is a voter. He may have no character — even no money; — that is no matter — he is male. The noblest woman has no voice in the state. Men make laws, disposing of her property, her person, her children; still she must bear it, "with a patient shrug."

Looking at it as a matter of pure right and pure science, I know no reason why woman should not be a voter, or hold office, or make and administer laws. I do not see how I can shut myself into political privileges and shut woman out, and do both in the name of unalienable right. Certainly, every woman has a natural right to have her property represented in the general representation of property, and her person represented in the general representation of persons.

Looking at it as a matter of expediency, see some facts. Suppose woman had a share in the municipal regulation of Boston, and there were as many alderwomen as aldermen, as many common-council women as common-council men, do you believe that,

in defiance of the law of Massachusetts, the city government, last spring, would have licensed every two hundred and forty-fourth person of the population of the city to sell intoxicating drink? would have made every thirty-fifth voter a rum-seller? I do not.

Do you believe the women of Boston would spend ten thousand dollars in one year in a city frolic, or spend two or three thousand every year, on the Fourth of July, for sky-rockets and fire-crackers; would spend four or five thousand dollars to get their Canadian guests drunk in Boston harbor, and then pretend that Boston had not money enough to establish a high school for girls, to teach the daughters of mechanics and grocers to read French and Latin, and to understand the higher things which rich men's sons are driven to at college? I do not.

Do you believe that the women of Boston, in 1851, would have spent three or four thousand dollars to kidnap a poor man, and have taken all the chains which belonged to the city and put them round the court-house, and have drilled three hundred men, armed with bludgeons and cutlasses, to steal a man and carry him back to slavery? I do not. Do you think, if the women had had the control, "fifteen hundred men of property and standing" would have volunteered to take a poor man, kidnapped in Boston, and conduct him out of the state, with fire and sword? I believe no such thing.

Do you think the women of Boston would take the poorest and most unfortunate children in the town, put them all together into one school, making that the most miserable in the city, where they had not and could not have half the advantages of the other children in different schools, and all that because the unfortunates were dark-colored? Do you think the women of Boston would shut a bright boy out of the High School or Latin School, because he was black in the face?

Women are said to be cowardly. When Thomas Sims, out of his dungeon, sent to the churches his petition for their prayers, had women been "the Christian clergy," do you believe *they* would not have dared to pray?

If women had a voice in the affairs of Massachusetts, do you

think they would ever have made laws so that a lazy husband could devour all the substance of his active wife—spite of her wish; so that a drunken husband could command her bodily presence in his loathly house; and when an infamous man was divorced from his wife, that he could keep all the children? I confess I do not.

If the affairs of the nation had been under woman's joint control, I doubt that we should have butchered the Indians with such exterminating savagery, that, in fifty years, we should have spent seven hundreds of millions of dollars for war, and now, in time of peace, send twenty annual millions more to the same waste. I doubt that we should have spread slavery into nine new states, and made it national. I think the Fugitive Slave Bill would never have been an act. Woman has some respect for the natural law of God.

I know men say woman cannot manage the great affairs of a nation. Very well. Government is political economy—national housekeeping. Does any respectable woman keep house so badly as the United States? with so much bribery, so much corruption, so much quarrelling in the domestic councils?

But government is also political morality, it is national ethics. Is there any worthy woman who rules her household as wickedly as the nations are ruled? who hires bullies to fight for her? Is there any woman who treats one sixth part of her household as if they were cattle and not creatures of God, as if they were things and not persons? I know of none such. In government as house-keeping, or government as morality, I think man makes a very poor appearance, when he says woman could not do as well as he has done and is doing.

I doubt that women will ever, as a general thing, take the same interest as men in political affairs, or find therein an abiding satisfaction. But that is for women themselves to determine, not for men.

.In order to attain the end,—the development of man in body and spirit,—human institutions must represent all parts of human

nature, both the masculine and the feminine element. For the well-being of the human race, we need the joint action of man and woman, in the family, the community, the church and the state. A family without the presence of woman—with no mother, no wife, no sister, no womankind—is a sad thing. I think a community without woman's equal social action, a church without her equal ecclesiastical action, and a state without her equal political action, is almost as bad—is very much what a house would be without a mother, wife, sister or friend.

You see what prevails in the Christian civilization of the nineteenth century; it is Force—force of body, force of brain. There is little justice, little philanthropy, little piety. Selfishness preponderates everywhere in Christendom—individual, domestic, social, ecclesiastical, national selfishness. It is preached as gospel and enacted as law. It is thought good political economy for a strong people to devour the weak nations; for “Christian” England and America to plunder the “heathen” and annex their land; for a strong class to oppress and ruin the feeble class; for the capitalists of England to pauperize the poor white laborer, for the capitalists of America to enslave the poorer black laborer; for a strong man to oppress the weak men; for the sharper to buy labor too cheap, and sell its product too dear, and so grow rich by making many poor. Hence, nation is arrayed against nation, class against class, man against man. Nay, it is commonly taught that mankind is arrayed against God, and God against man; that the world is a universal discord; that there is no solidarity of man with man, of man with God. I fear we shall never get far beyond this theory and this practice, until woman has her natural rights as the equal of man, and takes her natural place in regulating the affairs of the family, the community, the church and the state.

It seems to me God has treasured up a reserved power in the nature of woman to correct many of those evils which are Christendom's disgrace to-day.

Circumstances help or hinder our development, and are one of the two forces which determine the actual character of a nation, or of mankind, at any special period. Hitherto, amongst men,

circumstances have favored the development of only intellectual power, in all its forms — chiefly in its lower forms. At present, mankind, as a whole, has the superiority over womankind, as a whole, in all that pertains to intellect, the higher and the lower. Man has knowledge, has ideas, has administrative skill; enacts the rules of conduct for the individual, the family, the community, the church, the state, and the world. He applies these rules of conduct to life, and so controls the great affairs of the human race. You see what a world he has made of it. There is male vigor in this civilization, miscalled "Christian;" and in its leading nations there are industry and enterprise, which never fail. There is science, literature, legislation, agriculture, manufactures, mining, commerce, such as the world never saw. With the vigor of war, the Anglo-Saxon now works the works of peace. England abounds in wealth, — richest of lands; but look at her poor, her vast army of paupers, two million strong, the Irish whom she drives with the hand of famine across the sea. Martin Luther was right when he said, The richer the nation, the poorer the poor. America is "democratic" — "the freest and most enlightened people in the world." Look at her slaves; every sixth woman in the country sold as a beast; with no more legal respect paid to her marriage than the farmer pays to the conjunctions of his swine. America is well educated; there are four millions of children in the school-houses of the land; it is a states-prison offence to teach a slave to read the three letters which spell God. The more "democratic" the country, the tighter is bondage ironed on the slave. Look at the cities of England and America. What riches, what refinement, what culture of man and woman too! Ay; but what poverty, what ignorance, what beastliness of man and woman too! The Christian civilization of the nineteenth century is well summed up in London and New York — the two foci of the Anglo-Saxon tribe, which control the shape of the world's commercial ellipse. Look at the riches, and the misery; at the "religious enterprise," and the heathen darkness; at the virtue, the decorum and the beauty of woman well-born and well-bred — and at the wild sea

of prostitution, which swells and breaks and dashes against the bulwarks of society — every ripple was a woman once!

O, brother-men, who make these things, is this a pleasant sight? Does your literature complain of it — of the waste of human life, the slaughter of human souls, the butchery of woman? British literature begins to wail, in "Nicholas Nickleby," and "Jane Eyre," and "Mary Barton," and "Alton Locke," in many a "Song of the Shirt;" but the respectable literature of America is deaf as a cent to the outcry of humanity expiring in agonies. It is busy with California, or the Presidency, or extolling iniquity in high places, or flattering the vulgar vanity which buys its dross for gold. It cannot even imitate the philanthropy of English letters; it is "up" for California and a market. Does not the church speak? — the English church, with its millions of money, the American, with its millions of men, — both wont to bay the moon of foreign heathenism? The church is a dumb dog, that cannot bark, sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. It is a church without woman, believing in a male and jealous God, and rejoicing in a boundless, endless hell!

Hitherto, with woman, circumstances have hindered the development of intellectual power, in all its forms. She has not knowledge, has not ideas or practical skill to equal the force of man. But circumstances have favored the development of pure and lofty emotion in advance of man. She has moral feeling, affectional feeling, religious feeling, far in advance of man; her moral, affectional and religious intuitions are deeper and more trustworthy than his. Here she is eminent, as he is in knowledge, in ideas, in administrative skill.

I think man will always lead in affairs of intellect, — of reason, imagination, understanding, — he has the bigger brain; but that woman will always lead in affairs of emotion, — moral, affectional, religious, — she has the better heart, the truer intuition of the right, the lovely, the holy. The literature of women in this century is juster, more philanthropic, more religious, than that of men. Do you not hear the cry which, in New England, a woman is raising in the world's ears against the foul wrong which America

is working in the world? Do you not hear the echo of that woman's voice come over the Atlantic,—returned from European shores in many a tongue,—French, German, Italian, Swedish, Danish, Russian, Dutch? How a woman touches the world's heart!—because she speaks justice, speaks piety, speaks love. What voice is strongest raised in continental Europe, pleading for the oppressed and down-trodden? That also is a woman's voice!

Well, we want the excellence of man and woman both united; intellectual power, knowledge, great ideas—in literature, philosophy, theology, ethics—and practical skill; but we want something better—the moral, affectional, religious intuition, to put justice into ethics, love into theology, piety into science and letters. Everywhere in the family, the community, the church and the state, we want the masculine and feminine element coöperating and conjoined. Woman is to correct man's taste, mend his morals, excite his affections, inspire his religious faculties. Man is to quicken her intellect, to help her will, translate her sentiments to ideas, and enact them into righteous laws. Man's moral action, at best, is only a sort of general human providence, aiming at the welfare of a part, and satisfied with achieving the "greatest good of the greatest number." Woman's moral action is more like a special human providence, acting without general rules, but caring for each particular case. We need both of these, the general and the special, to make a total human providence.

If man and woman are counted equivalent, — equal in rights, though with diverse powers, — shall we not mend the literature of the world, its theology, its science, its laws, and its actions too? I cannot believe that wealth and want are to stand ever side by side as desperate foes; that culture must ride only on the back of ignorance; and feminine virtue be guarded by the degradation of whole classes of ill-starred men, as in the East, or the degradation of whole classes of ill-starred women, as in the West; but while we neglect the means of help God puts in our power, why, the present must be like the past — "property" must be theft, "law"

the strength of selfish will, and "Christianity"—what we see it is, the apology for every powerful wrong.

To every woman let me say,—Respect your nature as a human being, your nature as a woman; then respect your rights, then remember your duty to possess, to use, to develop and to enjoy every faculty which God has given you, each in its normal way.

And to men let me say,—Respect, with the profoundest reverence respect the mother that bore you, the sisters who bless you, the woman that you love, the woman that you marry. As you seek to possess your own manly rights, seek also, by that great arm, by that powerful brain, seek to vindicate her rights as woman, as your own as man. Then we may see better things in the church, better things in the state, in the community, in the home. Then the green shall show what buds it hid, the buds shall blossom, the flowers bear fruit, and the blessing of God be on us all.

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wife of John Stuart Mill

ENFRANCHISEMENT OF WOMEN.

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Most of our readers will probably learn from these pages, for the first time, that there has arisen in the United States, and in the most civilized and enlightened portion of them, an organized agitation on a new question, — new, not to thinkers, nor to any one by whom the principles of free and popular government are felt, as well as acknowledged, but new, and even unheard of, as a subject for public meetings and practical political action. This question is, the enfranchisement of women; their admission, in law, and in fact, to equality in all rights, political, civil and social, with the male citizens of the community.

It will add to the surprise with which many will receive this intelligence, that the agitation which has commenced is not a pleading by male writers and orators *for* women, those who are professedly to be benefited remaining either indifferent or ostensibly hostile; it is a political movement, practical in its objects, carried on in a form which denotes an intention to persevere. And it is a movement not merely *for* women, but *by* them. Its first public manifestation appears to have been a convention of women, held in the State of Ohio, in the spring of 1850. Of

this meeting we have seen no report. On the 23d and 24th of October last, a succession of public meetings was held at Worcester, in Massachusetts, under the name of a "Women's Rights Convention," of which the president was a woman, and nearly all the chief speakers women; numerous reinforced, however, by men, among whom were some of the most distinguished leaders in the kindred cause of negro emancipation. A general and four special committees were nominated, for the purpose of carrying on the undertaking until the next annual meeting.

According to the report in the *New York Tribune*, above a thousand persons were present throughout, and, "if a larger place could have been had, many thousands more would have attended." The place was described as "crowded, from the beginning, with attentive and interested listeners." In regard to the quality of the speaking, the proceedings bear an advantageous comparison with those of any popular movement with which we are acquainted, either in this country or in America. Very rarely, in the oratory of public meetings, is the part of verbiage and declamation so small, that of calm good sense and reason so considerable. The result of the convention was, in every respect, encouraging to those by whom it was summoned; and it is probably destined to inaugurate one of the most important of the movements towards political and social reform, which are the best characteristic of the present age.

That the promoters of this new agitation take their stand on principles, and do not fear to declare these in their widest extent, without time-serving or compromise, will be seen from the resolutions adopted by the convention, part of which we transcribe:

Resolved, That every human being, of full age, and resident for a proper length of time on the soil of the nation, who is required to obey the law, is entitled to a voice in its enactment; that every such person, whose property or labor is taxed for the support of the government, is entitled to a direct share in such government. Therefore,

Resolved, That women are entitled to the right of suffrage, and to be considered eligible to office; and that every party, which claims to represent the humanity, the civilization, and the progress of the age, is bound to in-

scribe on its banners, equality before the law, without distinction of sex or color.

Resolved, That civil and political rights acknowledge no sex, and therefore the word "male" should be stricken from every state constitution.

Resolved, That, since the prospect of honorable and useful employment in after life is the best stimulus to the use of educational advantages, and since the best education is that we give ourselves, in the struggles, employments and discipline of life; therefore it is impossible that women should make full use of the instruction already accorded to them, or that their career should do justice to their faculties, until the avenues to the various civil and professional employments are thrown open to them.

Resolved, That every effort to educate women, without according to them their rights, and arousing their conscience by the weight of their responsibilities, is futile, and a waste of labor.

Resolved, That the laws of property, as affecting married persons, demand a thorough revisal, so that all rights be equal between them; that the wife have, during life, an equal control over the property gained by their mutual toil and sacrifices, and be heir to her husband precisely to that extent that he is heir to her, and entitled at her death to dispose by will of the same share of the joint property as he is.

The following is a brief summary of the principal demands:

1. *Education* in primary and high schools, universities, medical, legal and theological institutions.
2. *Partnership* in the labors and gains, risks and remunerations, of productive industry.
3. *A coequal share* in the formation and administration of laws, — municipal, state and national, — through legislative assemblies, courts, and executive offices.

It would be difficult to put so much true, just and reasonable meaning into a style so little calculated to recommend it as that of some of the resolutions. But whatever objection may be made to some of the expressions, none, in our opinion, can be made to the demands themselves. As a question of justice, the case seems to us too clear for dispute. As one of expediency, the more thoroughly it is examined, the stronger it will appear.

That women have as good a claim as men have, in point of personal right, to the suffrage, or to a place in the jury-box, it would be difficult for any one to deny. It cannot certainly be denied by the United States of America, as a people or as a community.

Their democratic institutions rest avowedly on the inherent right of every one to a voice in the government. Their Declaration of Independence, framed by the men who are still their great constitutional authorities, — that document which has been from the first, and is now, the acknowledged basis of their polity, — commences with this express statement :

“ We hold these truths to be self-evident : that all men are created equal ; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights ; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness ; that, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.”

We do not imagine that any American democrat will evade the force of these expressions by the dishonest or ignorant subterfuge, that “ men,” in this memorable document, does not stand for human beings, but for one sex only ; that “ life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness,” are “ inalienable rights ” of only one moiety of the human species ; and that “ the governed,” whose consent is affirmed to be the only source of just power, are meant for that half of mankind only, who, in relation to the other, have hitherto assumed the character of *governors*. The contradiction between principle and practice cannot be explained away. A like dereliction of the fundamental maxims of their political creed has been committed by the Americans in the flagrant instance of the negroes ; of this they are learning to recognize the turpitude. After a struggle which, by many of its incidents, deserves the name of heroic, the abolitionists are now so strong in numbers and influence, that they hold the balance of parties in the United States. It was fitting that the men whose names will remain associated with the extirpation from the democratic soil of America of the aristocracy of color, should be among the originators, for America and for the rest of the world, of the first collective protest against the aristocracy of sex ; a distinction as accidental as that of color, and fully as irrelevant to all questions of government.

Not only to the democracy of America the claim of women to

civil and political equality makes an irresistible appeal, but also to those radicals and chartists in the British islands, and democrats on the continent, who claim what is called universal suffrage as an inherent right, unjustly and oppressively withheld from them. For with what truth or rationality could the suffrage be termed universal, while half the human species remain excluded from it? To declare that a voice in the government is the right of all, and demand it only for a part, — the part, namely, to which the claimant himself belongs, — is to renounce even the appearance of principle. The chartist who denies the suffrage to women is a chartist only because he is not a lord; he is one of those levellers who would level only down to themselves.

Even those who do not look upon a voice in the government as a matter of personal right, nor profess principles which require that it should be extended to all, have usually traditional maxims of political justice, with which it is impossible to reconcile the exclusion of all women from the common rights of citizenship. It is an axiom of English freedom, that taxation and representation should be coëxtensive. Even under the laws which give the wife's property to the husband, there are many unmarried women who pay taxes. It is one of the fundamental doctrines of the British constitution, that all persons should be tried by their peers; yet women, whenever tried, are tried by male judges and a male jury. To foreigners, the law accords the privilege of claiming that half the jury should be composed of themselves; not so to women. Apart from maxims of detail, which represent local and national, rather than universal ideas, it is an acknowledged dictate of justice, to make no degrading distinctions without necessity. In all things, the presumption ought to be on the side of equality. A reason must be given why anything should be permitted to one person, and interdicted to another. But when that which is interdicted includes nearly everything which those to whom it is permitted most prize, and to be deprived of which they feel to be most insulting; when not only political liberty, but personal freedom of action, is the prerogative of a caste; when even, in the exercise of industry, almost all employments which task the

higher faculties in an important field, which lead to distinction, riches, or even pecuniary independence, are fenced round as the exclusive domain of the predominant section, scarcely any doors being left open to the dependent class, except such as all who can enter elsewhere disdainfully pass by; the miserable expediencies which are advanced as excuses for so grossly partial a dispensation would not be sufficient, even if they were real, to render it other than a flagrant injustice. While, far from being expedient, we are firmly convinced that the division of mankind into two castes, one born to rule over the other, is, in this case, as in all cases, an unqualified mischief; a source of perversion and demoralization, both to the favored class and to those at whose expense they are favored; producing none of the good which it is the custom to ascribe to it, and forming a bar, almost insuperable, while it lasts, to any really vital improvement, either in the character or in the social condition of the human race.

These propositions it is now our purpose to maintain. But, before entering on them, we would endeavor to dispel the preliminary objections which, in the minds of persons to whom the subject is new, are apt to prevent a real and conscientious examination of it. The chief of these obstacles is that most formidable one—custom. Women never have had equal rights with men. The claim in their behalf, of the common rights of mankind, is looked upon as barred by universal practice. This strongest of prejudices, the prejudice against what is new and unknown, has, indeed, in an age of changes like the present, lost much of its force; if it had not, there would be little hope of prevailing against it. Over three fourths of the habitable world, even at this day, the answer, "It has always been so," closes all discussion. But it is the boast of modern Europeans, and of their American kindred, that they know and do many things which their forefathers neither knew nor did; and it is, perhaps, the most unquestionable point of superiority in the present, above former ages, that habit is not now the tyrant it formerly was over opinions and modes of action, and that the worship of custom is a declining idolatry. An uncustomary thought, on a subject which touches the greater interests of life,

still startles when first presented ; but if it can be kept before the mind until the impression of strangeness wears off, it obtains a hearing, and as rational a consideration as the intellect of the hearer is accustomed to bestow on any other subject.

In the present case, the prejudice of custom is doubtless on the unjust side. Great thinkers, indeed, at different times, from Plato to Condorcet, besides some of the most eminent names of the present age, have made emphatic protests in favor of the equality of women. And there have been voluntary societies, religious or secular, of which the Society of Friends is the most known, by whom that principle was recognized. But there has been no political community or nation in which, by law, and usage, women have not been in a state of political and civil inferiority. In the ancient world, the same fact was alleged, with equal truth, in behalf of slavery. It might have been alleged in favor of the mitigated form of slavery, serfdom, all through the middle ages. It was urged against freedom of industry, freedom of conscience, freedom of the press ; none of these liberties were thought compatible with a well-ordered state, until they had proved their possibility by actually existing as facts. That an institution or a practice is customary, is no presumption of its goodness, when any other sufficient cause can be assigned for its existence. There is no difficulty in understanding why the subjection of women has been a custom. No other explanation is needed than physical force.

That those who were physically weaker should have been made legally inferior, is quite conformable to the mode in which the world has been governed. Until very lately, the rule of physical strength was the general law of human affairs. Throughout history, the nations, races, classes, which found themselves the strongest, either in muscles, in riches, or in military discipline, have conquered and held in subjection the rest. If, even in the most improved nations, the law of the sword is at last discountenanced as unworthy, it is only since the calumniated eighteenth century. Wars of conquest have only ceased since democratic revolutions began. The world is very young, and has but just

begun to cast off injustice. It is only now getting rid of negro slavery. It is only now getting rid of monarchical despotism. It is only now getting rid of hereditary feudal nobility. It is only now getting rid of disabilities on the ground of religion. It is only beginning to treat any *men* as citizens, except the rich and a favored portion of the middle class. Can we wonder that it has not yet done as much for women? As society was constituted until the last few generations, inequality was its very basis; association grounded on equal rights scarcely existed; to be equals was to be enemies; two persons could hardly coöperate in anything, or meet in any amicable relation, without the law's appointing that one of them should be the superior of the other. Mankind have outgrown this state, and all things now tend to substitute, as the general principle of human relations, a just equality instead of the dominion of the strongest. But, of all relations, that between men and women being the nearest and most intimate, and connected with the greatest number of strong emotions, was sure to be the last to throw off the old rule and receive the new; for, in proportion to the strength of a feeling, is the tenacity with which it clings to the forms and circumstances with which it has even accidentally become associated.

When a prejudice which has any hold on the feelings finds itself reduced to the unpleasant necessity of assigning reasons, it thinks it has done enough when it has reasserted the very point in dispute, in phrases which appeal to the preëxisting feeling. Thus, many persons think they have sufficiently justified the restrictions on women's field of action when they have said that the pursuits from which women are excluded are *unfeminine*, and that the *proper sphere* of women is not politics or publicity, but private and domestic life.

We deny the right of any portion of the species to decide for another portion, or any individual for another individual, what is and what is not their "proper sphere." The proper sphere for all human beings is the largest and highest which they are able to attain to. What this is, cannot be ascertained without complete liberty of choice. The speakers at the convention in America

have, therefore, done wisely and right in refusing to entertain the question of the peculiar aptitudes either of women or of men, or the limits within which this or that occupation may be supposed to be more adapted to the one or to the other. They justly maintain that these questions can only be satisfactorily answered by perfect freedom. Let every occupation be open to all, without favor or discouragement to any, and employments will fall into the hands of those men or women who are found by experience to be most capable of worthily exercising them. There need be no fear that women will take out of the hands of men any occupation which men perform better than they. Each individual will prove his or her capacities, in the only way in which capacities can be proved, by trial; and the world will have the benefit of the best faculties of all its inhabitants. But to interfere beforehand by an arbitrary limit, and declare that whatever be the genius, talent, energy, or force of mind, of an individual of a certain sex or class, those faculties shall not be exerted, or shall be exerted only in some few of the many modes in which others are permitted to use theirs, is not only an injustice to the individual, and a detriment to society, which loses what it can ill spare, but is also the most effectual mode of providing that, in the sex or class so fettered, the qualities which are not permitted to be exercised shall not exist.

We shall follow the very proper example of the convention, in not entering into the question of the alleged differences in physical or mental qualities between the sexes; not because we have nothing to say, but because we have too much: to discuss this one point tolerably would need all the space we have to bestow on the entire subject.* But if those who assert that the "proper sphere"

* An excellent passage on this part of the subject, from one of Sydney Smith's contributions to the *Edinburgh Review*, we will not refrain from quoting: "A great deal has been said of the original difference of capacity between men and women, as if women were more quick and men more judicious; as if women were more remarkable for delicacy of association, and men for stronger powers of attention. All this, we confess, appears to us very fanciful. That there is a difference in the understandings of the men

for women is the domestic mean by this that they have not shown themselves qualified for any other, the assertion evinces great ignorance of life and of history. Women have shown fitness for the highest social functions exactly in proportion as they have been admitted to them. By a curious anomaly, though ineligible to even the lowest offices of state, they are in some countries admitted to the highest of all, the regal; and if there is any one function for which they have shown a decided vocation, it is that of reigning. Not to go back to ancient history, we look in vain for abler or firmer rulers than Elizabeth; than Isabella of Castile; than Maria Theresa; than Catharine of Russia; than Blanche, mother of Louis IX. of France; than Jeanne d'Albret, mother of Henri Quatre. There are few kings on record who contended with more difficult circumstances, or overcame them more triumphantly, than these. Even in semi-barbarous Asia, princesses who have never been seen by men other than those of their own family, or ever spoken with them unless from behind a curtain, have, as regents, during the minority of their sons, exhibited many of the most brilliant examples of just and vigorous administration. In the middle ages, when the distance between the upper and lower ranks was greater than even between women and men, and the women of the privileged class, however subject to tyranny from men of the same class, were at a less distance below them than any one else was, and often in their absence represented them in their functions and authority, numbers of heroic

and the women we every day meet with, everybody, we suppose, must perceive; but there is none, surely, which may not be accounted for by the difference of circumstances in which they have been placed, without referring to any conjectural difference of original conformation of mind. As long as boys and girls run about in the dirt, and trundle hoops together, they are both precisely alike. If you catch up one half of these creatures, and train them to a particular set of actions and opinions, and the other half to a perfectly opposite set, of course their understandings will differ, as one or the other sort of occupations has called this or that talent into action. There is surely no occasion to go into any deeper or more abstruse reasoning, in order to explain so very simple a phenomenon."—*Sydney Smith's Works*, vol. i., p. 200.

chatelaines, like Jeanne de Montfort, or the great Countess of Derby, as late even as the time of Charles I., distinguished themselves, not only by their political, but their military capacity. In the centuries immediately before and after the Reformation, ladies of royal houses, as diplomatists, as governors of provinces, or as the confidential advisers of kings, equalled the first statesmen of their time; and the treaty of Cambray, which gave peace to Europe, was negotiated, in conferences where no other person was present, by the aunt of the Emperor Charles the Fifth, and the mother of Francis the First.

Concerning the fitness, then, of women for politics, there can be no question: but the dispute is more likely to turn upon the fitness of politics for women. When the reasons alleged for excluding women from active life in all its higher departments are stripped of their garb of declamatory phrases, and reduced to the simple expression of a meaning, they seem to be mainly three: the incompatibility of active life with maternity, and with the cares of a household; secondly, its alleged hardening effect on the character; and, thirdly, the inexpediency of making an addition to the already excessive pressure of competition in every kind of professional or lucrative employment.

The first, the maternity argument, is usually laid most stress upon; although (it needs hardly be said) this reason, if it be one, can apply only to mothers. It is neither necessary nor just to make imperative on women that they shall be either mothers or nothing; or, that if they had been mothers once, they shall be nothing else during the whole remainder of their lives. Neither women nor men need any law to exclude them from an occupation, if they have undertaken another which is incompatible with it. No one proposes to exclude the male sex from parliament because a man may be a soldier or sailor in active service, or a merchant whose business requires all his time and energies. Nine tenths of the occupations of men exclude them *de facto* from public life, as effectually as if they were excluded by law; but that is no reason for making laws to exclude even the nine tenths, much less the remaining tenth. The reason of the case is the same for women

as for men. There is no need to make provision by law that a woman shall not carry on the active details of a household, or of the education of children, and at the same time practise a profession or be elected to parliament. Where incompatibility is real, it will take care of itself; but there is gross injustice in making the incompatibility a pretence for the exclusion of those in whose case it does not exist. And these, if they were free to choose, would be a very large proportion. The maternity argument deserts its supporters in the case of single women, a large and increasing class of the population — a fact which, it is not irrelevant to remark, by tending to diminish the excessive competition of numbers, is calculated to assist greatly the prosperity of all. There is no inherent reason or necessity that all women should voluntarily choose to devote their lives to one animal function and its consequences. Numbers of women are wives and mothers only because there is no other career open to them, no other occupation for their feelings or their activities. Every improvement in their education and enlargement of their faculties, everything which renders them more qualified for any other mode of life, increases the number of those to whom it is an injury and an oppression to be denied the choice. To say that women must be excluded from active life because maternity disqualifies them for it, is in fact to say that every other career should be forbidden them, in order that maternity may be their only resource.

But, secondly, it is urged, that to give the same freedom of occupation to women as to men, would be an injurious addition to the crowd of competitors, by whom the avenues to almost all kinds of employment are choked up, and its remuneration depressed. This argument, it is to be observed, does not reach the political question. It gives no excuse for withholding from women the rights of citizenship. The suffrage, the jury-box, admission to the legislature and to office, it does not touch. It bears only on the industrial branch of the subject. Allowing it, then, in an economical point of view, its full force, — assuming that to lay open to women the employments now monopolized by men would tend,

like the breaking down of other monopolies, to lower the rate of remuneration in those employments, — let us consider what is the amount of this evil consequence, and what the compensation for it. The worst ever asserted, much worse than is at all likely to be realized, is, that if women competed with men, a man and a woman could not together earn more than is now earned by the man alone. Let us make this supposition, the most unfavorable supposition possible: the joint income of the two would be the same as before, while the woman would be raised from the position of a servant to that of a partner. Even if every woman, as matters now stand, had a claim on some man for support, how infinitely preferable is it that part of the income should be of the woman's earning, even if the aggregate sum were but little increased by it, rather than that she should be compelled to stand aside in order that men may be the sole earners, and the sole dispensers of what is earned! Even under the present laws respecting the property of women,* a woman who contributes materially to the support of the family cannot be treated in the same contemptuously tyrannical manner as one who, however she may toil as a domestic drudge, is a dependent on the man for subsistence. As for the depression of wages by increase of competition, remedies will be found for it in time. Palliatives might be applied immediately; for instance, a more rigid exclusion of children from industrial employment, during the years in which they ought to be working only to strengthen their bodies and minds for after life. Children are necessarily dependent, and under the power of others; and their labor, being not for themselves, but for the gain of their parents, is a proper subject for legislative regulation. With respect to the future, we neither believe that improvident multiplication, and

* The truly horrible effects of the present state of the law among the lowest of the working population is exhibited in those cases of hideous mal-treatment of their wives by working men, with which every newspaper, every police report, teems. Wretches unfit to have the smallest authority over any living thing have a helpless woman for their household slave. These excesses could not exist if women both earned and had the right to possess a part of the income of the family.

the consequent excessive difficulty of gaining a subsistence, will always continue, nor that the division of mankind into capitalists and hired laborers, and the regulation of the reward of laborers mainly by demand and supply, will be forever, or even much longer, the rule of the world. But so long as competition is the general law of human life, it is tyranny to shut out one half of the competitors. All who have attained the age of self-government have an equal claim to be permitted to sell whatever kind of useful labor they are capable of, for the price which it will bring.

The third objection to the admission of women to political or professional life, its alleged hardening tendency, belongs to an age now past, and is scarcely to be comprehended by people of the present time. There are still, however, persons who say that the world and its avocations render men selfish and unfeeling; that the struggles, rivalries and collisions of business and of politics, make them harsh and unamiable; that if half the species must unavoidably be given up to these things, it is the more necessary that the other half should be kept free from them; that to preserve women from the bad influences of the world is the only chance of preventing men from being wholly given up to them.

There would have been plausibility in this argument when the world was still in the age of violence; when life was full of physical conflict, and every man had to redress his injuries, or those of others, by the sword or by the strength of his arm. Women, like priests, by being exempted from such responsibilities, and from some part of the accompanying dangers, may have been enabled to exercise a beneficial influence. But in the present condition of human life, we do not know where those hardening influences are to be found, to which men are subject, and from which women are at present exempt. Individuals now-a-days are seldom called upon to fight hand to hand, even with peaceful weapons; personal enmities and rivalries count for little in worldly transactions; the general pressure of circumstances, not the adverse will of individuals, is the obstacle men now have to make head against. That pressure, when excessive, breaks the spirit, and cramps and sours the feelings, but not less of women

than of men, since they suffer certainly not less from its evils. There are still quarrels and dislikes, but the sources of them are changed. The feudal chief once found his bitterest enemy in his powerful neighbor, the minister or courtier in his rival for place ; but opposition of interest in active life, as a cause of personal animosity, is out of date ; the enmities of the present day arise not from great things, but small, — from what people say of one another, more than from what they do ; and if there are hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness, they are to be found among women fully as much as among men. In the present state of civilization, the notion of guarding women from the hardening influences of the world could only be realized by secluding them from society altogether. The common duties of common life, as at present constituted, are incompatible with any other softness in women than weakness. Surely weak minds in weak bodies must ere long cease to be even supposed to be either attractive or amiable.

But, in truth, none of these arguments and considerations touch the foundations of the subject. The real question is, whether it is right and expedient that one half of the human race should pass through life in a state of forced subordination to the other half. If the best state of human society is that of being divided into two parts, one consisting of persons with a will and a substantive existence, the other of humble companions to these persons, attached each of them to one, for the purpose of bringing up *his* children, and making *his* home pleasant to him ; if this is the place assigned to women, it is but kindness to educate them for this ; to make them believe that the greatest good fortune which can befall them is to be chosen by some man for this purpose ; and that every other career which the world deems happy or honorable is closed to them by the law, not of social institutions, but of nature and destiny.

When, however, we ask, why the existence of one half the species should be merely ancillary to that of the other, — why each woman should be a mere appendage to a man, allowed to have no interests of her own, that there may be nothing to compete in her

mind with his interests and his pleasure, — the only reason which can be given is, that men like it. It is agreeable to them that men should live for their own sake, women for the sake of men; and the qualities and conduct in subjects which are agreeable to rulers they succeed for a long time in making the subjects themselves consider as their appropriate virtues. Helvetius has met with much obloquy for asserting that persons usually mean by virtues the qualities which are useful or convenient to themselves. How truly this is said of mankind in general, and how wonderfully the ideas of virtue, set afloat by the powerful, are caught and imbibed by those under their dominion, is exemplified by the manner in which the world were once persuaded that the supreme virtue of subjects was loyalty to kings, and are still persuaded that the paramount virtue of womanhood is loyalty to men. Under a nominal recognition of a moral code common to both, in practice self-will and self-assertion form the type of what are designated as manly virtues, while abnegation of self, patience, resignation, and submission to power, unless when resistance is commanded by other interests than their own, have been stamped by general consent as preëminently the duties and graces required of women. The meaning being, merely, that power makes itself the centre of moral obligation, and that a man likes to have his own will, but does not like that his domestic companion should have a will different from his.

We are far from pretending that in modern and civilized times no reciprocity of obligation is acknowledged on the part of the stronger. Such an assertion would be very wide of the truth. But even this reciprocity, which has disarmed tyranny, at least in the higher and middle classes, of its most revolting features, yet when combined with the original evil of the dependent condition of women, has introduced in its turn serious evils.

In the beginning, and among tribes which are still in a primitive condition, women were and are the slaves of men for the purposes of toil. All the hard bodily labor devolves on them. The Australian savage is idle, while women painfully dig up the roots on which he lives. An American Indian, when he has killed a deer,

leaves it, and sends a woman to carry it home. In a state somewhat more advanced, as in Asia, women were and are the slaves of men for the purposes of sensuality. In Europe, there early succeeded a third and milder dominion, secured not by blows, nor by locks and bars, but by sedulous inculcation on the mind; feelings also of kindness, and ideas of duty, such as a superior owes to inferiors under his protection, became more and more involved in the relation. But it did not, for many ages, become a relation of companionship, even between unequals; the lives of the two persons were apart. The wife was part of the furniture of home, of the resting-place to which the man returned from business or pleasure. His occupations were, as they still are, among men; his pleasures and excitements also were, for the most part, among men—among his equals. He was a patriarch and a despot within four walls, and irresponsible power had its effect, greater or less according to his disposition, in rendering him domineering, exacting, self-worshipping, when not capriciously or brutally tyrannical. But if the moral part of his nature suffered, it was not necessarily so, in the same degree, with the intellectual or the active portion. He might have as much vigor of mind and energy of character as his nature enabled him, and as the circumstances of his times allowed. He might write the "Paradise Lost," or win the battle of Marengo. This was the condition of the Greeks and Romans, and of the moderns until a recent date. Their relations with their domestic subordinates occupied a mere corner, though a cherished one, of their lives. Their education as men, the formation of their character and faculties, depended mainly on a different class of influences.

It is otherwise now. The progress of improvement has imposed on all possessors of power, and of domestic power among the rest, an increased and increasing sense of correlative obligation. No man now thinks that his wife has no claim upon his actions, but such as he may accord to her. All men, of any conscience, believe that their duty to their wives is one of the most binding of their obligations. Nor is it supposed to consist solely in protection, which, in the present state of civilization, women have almost

ceased to need ; it involves care for their happiness and consideration of their wishes, with a not unfrequent sacrifice of their own to them. The power of husbands has reached the stage which the power of kings had arrived at, when opinion did not yet question the rightfulness of arbitrary power, but in theory, and to a certain extent in practice, condemned the selfish use of it. This improvement in the moral sentiments of mankind, and increased sense of the consideration due by every man to those who have no one but himself to look to, has tended to make home more and more the centre of interest, and domestic circumstances and society a larger and larger part of life, and of its pursuits and pleasures. The tendency has been strengthened by the changes of tastes and manners which have so remarkably distinguished the last two or three generations. In days not far distant, men found their excitement and filled up their time in violent bodily exercises, noisy merriment, and intemperance. They have now, in all but the very poorest classes, lost their inclination for these things, and for the coarser pleasures generally ; they have now scarcely any tastes but those which they have in common with women, and, for the first time in the world, men and women are really companions. A most beneficial change, if the companionship were between equals ; but being between unequals, it produces, what good observers have noticed, though without perceiving its cause, a progressive deterioration among men in what had hitherto been considered the masculine excellences. Those who are so careful that women should not become men, do not see that men are becoming what they have decided that women should be — are falling into the feebleness which they have so long cultivated in their companions. Those who are associated in their lives tend to become assimilated in character. In the present closeness of association between the sexes, men cannot retain manliness unless women acquire it.

There is hardly any situation more unfavorable to the maintenance of elevation of character or force of intellect, than to live in the society, and seek by preference the sympathy, of inferiors in mental endowments. Why is it that we constantly see in life

so much of intellectual and moral promise followed by such inadequate performance, but because the aspirant has compared himself only with those below himself, and has not sought improvement or stimulus from measuring himself with his equals or superiors? In the present state of social life, this is becoming the general condition of men. They care less and less for any sympathies, and are less and less under any personal influences, but those of the domestic roof. Not to be misunderstood, it is necessary that we should distinctly disclaim the belief that women are even now inferior in intellect to men. There are women who are the equals in intellect of any men who ever lived; and, comparing ordinary women with ordinary men, the varied though petty details which compose the occupation of women call forth probably as much of mental ability as the uniform routine of the pursuits which are the habitual occupation of a large majority of men. It is from nothing in the faculties themselves, but from the petty subjects and interests on which alone they are exercised, that the companionship of women, such as their present circumstances make them, so often exercises a dissolvent influence on high faculties and aspirations in men. If one of the two has no knowledge and no care about the great ideas and purposes which dignify life, or about any of its practical concerns save personal interests and personal vanities, her conscious, and still more her unconscious influence, will, except in rare cases, reduce to a secondary place in his mind, if not entirely extinguish, those interests which she cannot or does not share. Our argument here brings us into collision with what may be termed the moderate reformers of the education of women; a sort of persons who cross the path of improvement on all great questions; those who would maintain the old bad principles, mitigating their consequences. These say, that women should be, not slaves nor servants, but companions, and educated for that office (they do not say that men should be educated to be the companions of women). But since uncultivated women are not suitable companions for cultivated men, and a man who feels interest in things above and beyond the family circle wishes that his companion should sympathize with him: in

that interest, they therefore say, let women improve their understanding and taste, acquire general knowledge, cultivate poetry, art, even coquet with science, and some stretch their liberality so far as to say, inform themselves on politics; not as pursuits, but sufficiently to feel an interest in the subjects, and to be capable of holding a conversation on them with the husband, or at least of understanding and imbibing his wisdom. Very agreeable to him, no doubt, but unfortunately the reverse of improving. It is from having intellectual communion only with those to whom they can lay down the law, that so few men continue to advance in wisdom beyond the first stages. The most eminent men cease to improve if they associate only with disciples. When they have overtopped those who immediately surround them, if they wish for further growth, they must seek for others of their own stature to consort with. The mental companionship which is improving is communion between active minds, not mere contact between an active mind and a passive. This inestimable advantage is even now enjoyed when a strong-minded man and a strong-minded woman are, by a rare chance, united; and would be had far oftener, if education took the same pains to form strong-minded women which it takes to prevent them from being formed. The modern, and what are regarded as the improved and enlightened modes of education of women, abjure, as far as words go, an education of mere show, and profess to aim at solid instruction, but mean by that expression superficial information on solid subjects. Except accomplishments, which are now generally regarded as to be taught well, if taught at all, nothing is taught to women thoroughly. Small portions only of what it is attempted to teach thoroughly to boys are the whole of what it is intended or desired to teach to women. What makes intelligent beings is the power of thought; the stimuli which call forth that power are the interest and dignity of thought itself, and a field for its practical application. Both motives are cut off from those who are told from infancy that thought, and all its greater applications, are other people's business, while theirs is to make themselves agreeable to other people. High mental powers in women will be but an ex

ceptional accident, until every career is open to them, and until they, as well as men, are educated for themselves and for the world, — not one sex for the other.

In what we have said on the effect of the inferior position of women, combined with the present constitution of married life, we have thus far had in view only the most favorable cases, those in which there is some real approach to that union and blending of characters and of lives which the theory of the relation contemplates as its ideal standard. But if we look to the great majority of cases, the effect of women's legal inferiority on the character both of women and of men must be painted in far darker colors. We do not speak here of the grosser brutalities, nor of the man's power to seize on the woman's earnings, or compel her to live with him against her will. We do not address ourselves to any one who requires to have it proved that these things should be remedied. We suppose average cases, in which there is neither complete union nor complete disunion of feelings and of character; and we affirm that in such cases the influence of the dependence on the woman's side is demoralizing to the character of both.

The common opinion is, that, whatever may be the case with the intellectual, the moral influence of women over men is almost always salutary. It is, we are often told, the great counteractive of selfishness. However the case may be as to personal influence, the influence of the position tends eminently to promote selfishness. The most insignificant of men, the man who can obtain influence or consideration nowhere else, finds one place where he is chief and head. There is one person, often greatly his superior in understanding, who is obliged to consult him, and whom he is not obliged to consult. He is judge, magistrate, ruler, over their joint concerns; arbiter of all differences between them. The justice or conscience to which her appeal must be made is his justice and conscience; it is his to hold the balance and adjust the scales between his own claims or wishes and those of another. He is now the only tribunal, in civilized life, in which the same person is judge and party. A generous mind, in such a situation,

makes the balance incline against its own side, and gives the other not less, but more than a fair equality; and thus the weaker side may be enabled to turn the very fact of dependence into an instrument of power, and, in default of justice, take an ungenerous advantage of generosity; rendering the unjust power, to those who make an unselfish use of it, a torment and a burthen. But how is it when average men are invested with this power, without reciprocity and without responsibility? Give such a man the idea that he is first in law and in opinion, — that to will is his part, and hers to submit; it is absurd to suppose that this idea merely glides over his mind, without sinking into it, or having any effect on his feelings and practice. The propensity to make himself the first object of consideration, and others at most the second, is not so rare as to be wanting where everything seems purposely arranged for permitting its indulgence. If there is any self-will in the man, he becomes either the conscious or unconscious despot of his household. The wife, indeed, often succeeds in gaining her objects, but it is by some of the many various forms of indirectness and management.

Thus the position is corrupting equally to both; in the one it produces the vices of power, in the other those of artifice. Women, in their present physical and moral state, having stronger impulses, would naturally be franker and more direct than men; yet all the old saws and traditions represent them as artful and dissembling. Why? Because their only way to their objects is by indirect paths. In all countries where women have strong wishes and active minds, this consequence is inevitable; and if it is less conspicuous in England than in some other places, it is because English women, saving occasional exceptions, have ceased to have either strong wishes or active minds.

We are not now speaking of cases in which there is anything deserving the name of strong affection on both sides. That, where it exists, is too powerful a principle not to modify greatly the bad influences of the situation; it seldom, however, destroys them entirely. Much oftener the bad influences are too strong for the affection, and destroy it. The highest order of durable and

happy attachments would be a hundred times more frequent than they are, if the affection which the two sexes sought from one another were that genuine friendship which only exists between equals in privileges as in faculties. But with regard to what is commonly called affection in married life, — the habitual and almost mechanical feeling of kindness and pleasure in each other's society, which generally grows up between persons who constantly live together, unless there is actual dislike, — there is nothing in this to contradict or qualify the mischievous influence of the unequal relation. Such feelings often exist between a sultan and his favorites, between a master and his servants; they are merely examples of the pliability of human nature, which accommodates itself, in some degree, even to the worst circumstances, and the commonest nature always the most easily.

With respect to the influence personally exercised by women over men, it, no doubt, renders them less harsh and brutal; in ruder times, it was often the only softening influence to which they were accessible. But the assertion that the wife's influence renders the man less selfish contains, as things now are, fully as much error as truth. Selfishness towards the wife herself, and towards those in whom she is interested, the children, though favored by their dependence, the wife's influence no doubt tends to counteract. But the general effect on him of her character, so long as her interests are concentrated in the family, tends but to substitute for individual selfishness a family selfishness, wearing an amiable guise, and putting on the mask of duty. How rarely is the wife's influence on the side of public virtue! how rarely does it do otherwise than discourage any effort of principle by which the private interests or worldly vanities of the family can be expected to suffer! Public spirit, sense of duty towards the public good, is, of all virtues, as women are now educated and situated, the most rarely to be found among them; they have seldom even, what in men is often a partial substitute for public spirit, a sense of personal honor connected with any public duty. Many a man, whom no money or personal flattery would have bought, has bartered his political opinions against a title or invitations for his

wife ; and a still greater number are made mere hunters after the puerile vanities of society, because their wives value them. As for opinions, in Catholic countries, the wife's influence is another name for that of the priest ; he gives her, in the hopes and emotions connected with a future life, a consolation for the sufferings and disappointments which are her ordinary lot in this. Elsewhere, her weight is thrown into the scale either of the most commonplace, or of the most outwardly prosperous opinions : either those by which censure will be escaped, or by which worldly advancement is likeliest to be procured. In England the wife's influence is usually on the illiberal and anti-popular side ; this is generally the gaining side for personal interest and vanity ; and what to her is the democracy or liberalism in which she has no part— which leaves her the Pariah it found her ? The man himself, when he marries, usually declines into conservatism ; begins to sympathize with the holders of power more than with the victims, and thinks it his part to be on the side of authority. As to mental progress, except those vulgarer attainments by which vanity or ambition are promoted, there is generally an end to it in a man who marries a woman mentally his inferior ; unless, indeed, he is unhappy in marriage, or becomes indifferent. From a man of twenty-five or thirty, after he is married, an experienced observer seldom expects any further progress in mind or feelings. It is rare that the progress already made is maintained. Any spark of the *mens divini*, which might otherwise have spread and become a flame, seldom survives for any length of time unextinguished. For a mind which learns to be satisfied with what it already is, which does not incessantly look forward to a degree of improvement not yet reached, becomes relaxed, self-indulgent, and loses the spring and tension which maintain it even at the point already attained. And there is no fact in human nature to which experience bears more invariable testimony than to this ; that all social or sympathetic influences which do not raise up pull down ; if they do not tend to stimulate and exalt the mind, they tend to vulgarize it.

For the interest, therefore, not only of women, but of men, and of human improvement, in the widest sense, the emancipation of

women, which the modern world often boasts of having effected, and for which credit is sometimes given to civilization, and sometimes to Christianity, cannot stop where it is. If it were either necessary or just that one portion of mankind should remain mentally and spiritually only half developed, the development of the other portion ought to have been made, as far as possible, independent of their influence. Instead of this, they have become the most intimate, and, it may now be said, the only intimate associates of those to whom yet they are sedulously kept inferior; and have been raised just high enough to drag the others down to themselves.

We have left behind a host of vulgar objections, either as not worthy of an answer, or as answered by the general course of our remarks. A few words, however, must be said on one plea, which, in England, is made much use of, for giving an unselfish air to the upholding of selfish privileges, and which, with unobserving, unreflecting people, passes for much more than it is worth. Women, it is said, do not desire, do not seek, what is called their emancipation. On the contrary, they generally disown such claims when made in their behalf, and fall with *acharnement* upon any one of themselves who identifies herself with their common cause.

Supposing the fact to be true in the fullest extent ever asserted, if it proves that European women ought to remain as they are, it proves exactly the same with respect to Asiatic women; for they, too, instead of murmuring at their seclusion, and at the restraint imposed upon them, pride themselves on it, and are astonished at the effrontery of women who receive visits from male acquaintances, and are seen in the streets unveiled. Habits of submission make men, as well as women, servile-minded. The vast population of Asia do not desire or value — probably would not accept — political liberty, nor the savages of the forest civilization; which does not prove that either of those things is undesirable for them, or that they will not, at some future time, enjoy it. Custom hardens human beings to any kind of degradation, by deadening the part of their nature which would resist it. And the case

of women is, in this respect, even, a peculiar one, for no other inferior caste that we have heard of have been taught to regard their degradation as their honor. The argument, however, implies a secret consciousness that the alleged preference of women for their dependent state is merely apparent, and arises from their being allowed no choice; for, if the preference be natural, there can be no necessity for enforcing it by law. To make laws compelling people to follow their inclination, has not hitherto been thought necessary by any legislator. The plea that women do not desire any change is the same that has been urged, times out of mind, against the proposal of abolishing any social evil, — “there is no complaint;” which is generally not true, and, when true, only so because there is not that hope of success, without which complaint seldom makes itself audible to unwilling ears. How does the objector know that women do not desire equality and freedom? He never knew a woman who did not, or would not, desire it for herself individually. It would be very simple to suppose that, if they do desire it, they will say so. Their position is like that of the tenants or laborers who vote against their own political interests to please their landlords or employers; with the unique addition that submission is inculcated on them from childhood, as the peculiar attraction and grace of their character. They are taught to think that, to repel actively even an admitted injustice, done to themselves, is somewhat unfeminine, and had better be left to some male friend or protector. To be accused of rebelling against anything which admits of being called an ordinance of society, they are taught to regard as an imputation of a serious offence, to say the least, against the proprieties of their sex. It requires unusual moral courage, as well as disinterestedness, in a woman, to express opinions favorable to women’s enfranchisement, until, at least, there is some prospect of obtaining it. The comfort of her individual life, and her social consideration, usually depend on the good will of those who hold the undue power; and to possessors of power any complaint, however bitter, of the misuse of it, is a less flagrant act of insubordination than to protest against the power itself. The professions of women in this matter remind us of the state offenders of old, who, on the point of exe-

cution, used to protest their love and devotion to the sovereign by whose unjust mandate they suffered. Griselda herself might be matched from the speeches put by Shakspeare into the mouths of male victims of kingly caprice and tyranny; the Duke of Buckingham, for example, in "Henry the Eighth," and even Wolsey. The literary class of women, especially in England, are ostentatious in disclaiming the desire for equality of citizenship, and proclaiming their complete satisfaction with the place which society assigns to them; exercising in this, as in many other respects, a most noxious influence over the feelings and opinions of men, who unsuspectingly accept the servilities of toadyism as concessions to the force of truth, not considering that it is the personal interest of these women to profess whatever opinions they expect will be agreeable to men. It is not among men of talent, sprung from the people, and patronized and flattered by the aristocracy, that we look for the leaders of a democratic movement. Successful literary women are just as unlikely to prefer the cause of women to their own social consideration. They depend on men's opinion for their literary as well as for their feminine successes; and such is their bad opinion of men, that they believe that there is not more than one in ten thousand who does not dislike and fear strength, sincerity, or high spirit, in a woman. They are, therefore, anxious to earn pardon and toleration, for whatever of these qualities their writings may exhibit on other subjects, by a studied display of submission on this: that they may give no occasion for vulgar men to say — what nothing will prevent vulgar men from saying — that learning makes women unfeminine, and that literary ladies are likely to be bad wives.

But enough of this; especially as the fact which affords the occasion for this notice makes it impossible any longer to assert the universal acquiescence of women (saving individual exceptions) in their dependent condition. In the United States, at least, there are women, seemingly numerous, and now organized for action on the public mind, who demand equality in the fullest acceptation of the word, and demand it by a straight-forward appeal to men's sense of justice, not plead for it with a timid deprecation of their displeasure.

Like other popular movements, however, this may be seriously retarded by the blunders of its adherents. Tried by the ordinary standard of public meetings, the speeches at the convention are remarkable for the preponderance of the rational over the declamatory element; but there are some exceptions; and things to which it is impossible to attach any rational meaning have found their way into the resolutions. Thus, the resolution which sets forth the claims made in behalf of women, after claiming equality in education, in industrial pursuits, and in political rights, enumerates as a fourth head of demand something under the name of "social and spiritual union," and "a medium of expressing the highest moral and spiritual views of justice," with other similar verbiage, serving only to mar the simplicity and rationality of the other demands; resembling those who would weakly attempt to combine nominal equality between men and women with enforced distinctions in their privileges and functions. What is wanted for women is equal rights, equal admission to all social privileges; not a position apart, — a sort of sentimental priesthood. To this, the only just and rational principle, both the resolutions and the speeches, for the most part, adhere. They contain so little which is akin to the nonsensical paragraph in question, that we suspect it not to be the work of the same hands as most of the other resolutions. The strength of the cause lies in the support of those who are influenced by reason and principle; and to attempt to recommend it by sentimentalities, absurd in reason, and inconsistent with the principle on which the movement is founded, is to place a good cause on a level with a bad one.

There are indications that the example of America will be followed on this side of the Atlantic; and the first step has been taken in that part of England where every serious movement, in the direction of political progress, has its commencement — the manufacturing districts of the north. On the 13th of February, 1851, a petition of women, agreed to by a public meeting at Sheffield, and claiming the elective franchise, was presented to the House of Lords by the Earl of Carlisle.

WOMAN AND HER WISHES.

An Essay:

BY

THOMAS WENTWORTH HIGGINSON,

MINISTER OF THE WORCESTER FREE CHURCH.

“Millions of throats will bawl for Civil Rights ;
— *No woman named.*” TENNYSON.

“EVERY book of knowledge which is known to Oosana or to Vreehaspatee is by nature implanted in the understandings of women.” This is the creed gallantly announced in that wise book of Oriental lore, the Heetopades of Veeshnoo Sarma. Probably it is from an extreme reliance on this inward illumination that we have from the same quarter of the globe the valuable suggestion, “Daughters should be made emulous of acquiring the virtues of their sex, but should be altogether forbidden to read and write. Yet we have changed all that, beneath our western star of empire. Those who once could not with propriety learn their letters, now have those letters conferred upon them as honorary appendages; and the maidens who once must not know A from B, may now acquire not only their A. B., but their A. M., their M. D., their F. R. S., and their A. A. S.; and are still grasping for more.

It must be confessed, however, that most of us look with distrust upon these feminine suffixes, as grammatical innovations, and are not yet prepared to go beyond the simpler combinations of the alphabet. But we all go thus far. It is a point conceded that

girls shall be "educated," which is our convenient synonyme for going to school. The most conservative grant this. And the sole question now open between these, and the most radical, is not Shall a woman have schooling? but, What shall she do with her schooling when she has it?

I do not mean to say that the facilities of tuition allowed to girls as yet equal those extended to boys; but they are evidently being equalized.

As regards our Massachusetts school system, there appears to be no difference, *out of Boston*, in the opportunities given to the sexes, while the use made of those opportunities by female pupils is in most towns greater, because they have more leisure than the non-collegiate portion of the boys. Everywhere but in Boston there is the same high school course open, for the daughters as for the sons of the people. At public examinations, I have seen contests of male and female intellect, on the bloodless field of the black-board, which it tried men's souls to watch. I have seen delicate girls, whose slight fingers could scarcely grasp the huge chalk bullet with which the field was won, meet and surmount the most staggering propositions in Conic Sections, which would (*crede experto*) scatter a Senior Class at some colleges, as if the chalk bullet were a bombshell. Let no one henceforward deny that our plans of school tuition, such as they are, have been fairly extended to girls also.

Beyond this, however, the equality has hardly reached. The colleges of Massachusetts are all masculine. The treasures and associations of Cambridge, to which so many young men have owed the impulse and enlightenment of their whole lives, are inaccessible to woman, save as the casual courtesy of librarian or professor may give her a passing glance into Gore Hall. And it is a remarkable fact, that simultaneously with the establishment of Antioch College in Ohio, which opens an equal academical provision for women, — under the presidency of the father of our Massachusetts school system, — we see in our own state the first instance of unequal educational legislation, in the bill establishing male scholarships in colleges. The merits of the measure in other re-

spects I do not disparage, but it is certainly liable to this objection. It is estimated that, even now, every graduate of Harvard has received a gratuity of about one thousand dollars, chiefly from private endowments, over and above his bills for tuition; and it is now proposed that the public shall vote, to a portion of these, one hundred dollars per annum in addition; thus still further increasing the disproportion.

We are apt to felicitate ourselves, however, on the great progress achieved in female education. Perhaps we are too indiscriminate in the rejoicing. There never was a time when there were not highly-educated women, according to the standard of their age. Isis and Minerva show the value set upon feminine intellect by the ancients. We forget the noble tribute of Plato to the genius of woman, in his Banquet. We forget the long line of learned and accomplished English women, from Lady Jane Grey to Elizabeth Barrett. We forget that wonderful people, the Spanish Arabs, among whom women were public lecturers and secretaries of kings while Christian Europe was sunk in darkness. Let me aid in rescuing from oblivion the name of Ayesha, daughter of Ahmed ben Mohammed ben Kadim, of Cordova, who was reckoned the most learned woman of her age (the tenth century) in poetry, mathematics, medicine, and the other sciences which then and there flourished. In the words of the Moorish historian, "She was beautiful like a rising sun, fine and slender like a young aloe bending its head to the southern breezes; if she ran, she looked like an antelope disappointing the sportsman by her rapid flight; and if occupied in study or meditation, her eyes resembled the soft and melting eyes of the gazelle, looking from the top of the rock upon the burning sands of the desert. She was a well of science, a mountain of discretion, an ocean of learning." This was the Arab definition of what enlightened and chivalrous Anglo-Saxons would call facetiously a "blue-stocking," or, more seriously, "an unsexed woman."

Following the Arab practice, there were female professors of the classics and of rhetoric at Salamanca and Alcala, under Ferdinand and Isabella. At the revival of letters in Italy, the intel-

lectual influence of Lucrezia Borgia is classed by Roscoe with that of his hero, Leo X. Vittoria Colonna and Veronica Gamba ranked as the equals and friends of Bembo and Michael Angelo; and Tiraboschi declared the *Rimatrice*, or female poets, of the fifteenth century, to be little inferior, either in number or merit, to the *Rimatori*. Visitors to the renowned university of Padua still observe, with admiration, at the top of its great stairway, the statue of its beautiful and learned professor, Elena Cornaro, the astronomer, musician, poetess and linguist, known at Rome as *the Humble*, and at Padua as *the Unalterable*. Pope Benedict XIV. bestowed on Maria Agnezi, a celebrated mathematician, the place of Apostolical Professor in the University of Bologna, in 1758. And Pope Clement XIV. (Ganganelli) wrote, in 1763, to a lady who had sent him her translation of Locke, expressing his satisfaction that the succession of learned women was still maintained in Italy.

These I cite merely as specimens of the abundant facts to be had for the asking. If I had at hand the once-renowned work of Peter Paul de Ribera, entitled, "The Immortal Triumphs and Heroic Enterprises of 845 Women," or, if I had the privilege of consulting the library of Count Leopold Ferri, sold at Padua in 1847, consisting solely of the works of female authors, and amounting to thirty thousand volumes, I would go more thoroughly into this branch of the subject.

I think it must, however, be conceded, on the most cursory examination, that the superiority of modern female tuition consists less in its high standard than in its general diffusion. But when we reach this point, another serious question arises.

For it is obvious that tuition in schools is a mere preliminary to the avocations of life; and every system must be judged by its connection as a whole. Now, the great defect of our plan of schooling for girls appears to be this: that it recognizes for them no object in existence except matrimony. This will be comparatively harmless, if we assume that every woman is to be married at twenty; but as this is the experience of only a small minority, there would seem to be a deficiency in the arrangement. And, in

view of the probable fact, that, at this moment, full one third of the women in Massachusetts are either unmarried or childless, there certainly appears to be a flaw from the outset in our educational plans.

The schooling of boys is *prospective*; what a source of mental and moral stimulus is indicated by that one word! All acquired faculties are to be brought to bear upon some definite end. The high school prepares for the academy; the academy, for college; college, for the professional school, perhaps; and all for some vocation where knowledge is power. Nay, who has not seen some indolent young man, who, after wasting all the opportunities of his earlier career, was yet galvanized into industry by the professional school, because the final pressure of an immediate aim was then applied?

But what adequate aim has the tuition of girls? To fit them to be wives and mothers? But so has the boy the probable destiny of becoming a husband and father: the father has commonly more supervision of at least the intellectual training of the children than the mother; and yet the young man has the prospect of this sacred responsibility to rouse him, and all the incentives, likewise, of professional and public duty. And if this accumulation of motives so often fails to act upon the boy, how can we expect that one alone will be sufficient for his sister?

To illustrate the manner in which this becomes apparent to an intelligent practical instructor, I quote the testimony of Mr. Smythe, of Oswego, N. Y., in a Teacher's Convention, a year or more ago:

"Mr. Smythe spoke from practical experience, having taught a large school of both girls and boys, and he had observed that, up to a certain point, their capacities or their progress were about equal. Perhaps the girls even showed more aptitude; but at that point they flagged, and there was a perceptible difference thenceforward. He had asked one young lady the reason of this, and she explained it thus: 'The boys are going into college; they have all before them; but we have nothing more to do—we are going "nowhere."' There was, he thought, an equality of talent in girls and boys; and if the former failed to evince it on any point, the failure arose from a want of stimulus. *They had no aim in society worthy to inspire them.*"

I cannot deny the truth of this. I have too often been asked, almost with tears, by young and well-taught girls, to suggest to them some employment that should fill the demands of heart and intellect,—something to absorb their time and thoughts. A pupil in a School of Design once told me that, in her opinion, the majority of the scholars sought the occupation, not as a means of support, nor to gratify an artistic taste, but solely for the sake of an interesting employment. And seeing the imperfect attempts to invent such employments, and the results, good in their way, but so wholly inadequate, I have almost sighed, with these discontented ones, over the one-sided benevolence of society; and felt that, to give “education” without giving an object, was but to strengthen the wings of a caged bird.

Nothing can hide from me the conviction that an immortal soul needs for its sustenance something more than visiting, and gardening, and novel-reading, and a crochet-needle, and the occasional manufacture of sponge-cake. Yet what else constitutes the recognized material for the life of most “well-educated” young ladies, from eighteen to twenty-five—that life so blameless and aimless. Some, I admit, are married; some teach school,—the one miserably underpaid occupation left open for the graduates of our high schools—the Procrustes-bed of all young female intellect. A few remarkable characters will, of course, strike out an independent path for themselves, in spite of discouragement. A few find ready for them, in the charge of younger brothers and sisters, a noble duty. A few have so strong a natural propensity for study that they pursue it by themselves, though without any ulterior aim. Some enter mechanical occupations, which are at least useful, as employing their hands and energies, if not their intellects.

But for most of those of average powers, “to this complexion must they come at last.” “It is a sad thing for me,” said an accomplished female teacher, in my hearing, “to watch my fine girls after they leave school, and see the expression of intellect gradually fade out of their faces, for want of an object to employ it.”

I do not claim that all young women share these dissatisfactions. They are confined to the thoughtful and the noble. The empty and the indolent find such a life satisfactory enough. "Why do you dislike to leave school?" said one young lady once, within my knowledge, to another. "Because I shall then have nothing to do," she answered. "Nothing to do!" was the astonished reply; "why, there is plenty to do; cannot you stay at home and make pretty little things to wear, as other girls do?" "But I don't care for that," pleaded the spirited and thoughtful maiden; "I don't think I was created and educated merely to make pretty little things to wear." But the protest was of no avail.

With the exclusion of women from intellectual employments, comes an accompanying exclusion from other of the more lucrative occupations, upon which I will not now dwell, "not because there is so little to be said upon it, but because there is so much." This prohibition extends even to the employments peculiarly fitted for woman, as the retail dry goods trade in our cities, which employs tens of thousands. Except in the medical profession, and a few other avocations very recently opened to women, their average wages are less than half those received by men for the same work. In Lowell, the average wages of women are estimated at two dollars per week (deducting board); those of men at four dollars and eighty cents, for toils not longer, and often no more difficult. In some of our towns, female grammar-school teachers are paid one hundred and seventy-five dollars per annum, — and male teachers five hundred dollars, for schools of the same grade, and of smaller size. The haunts of sin and shame in our great cities can tell some of the results of these sad inequalities.

But the question of employments, important though it be, is still a secondary one. Indeed, it will ultimately settle itself. It is not apparent that *men* have anything to do with it, except to secure fair play; which is much more, to be sure, than they have yet attempted. Energetic women will make their way into the avocations suited to them; and, the barrier once broken down, others will follow. *La carrière ouverte aux talens*, is the only

me to. No one can anticipate the results, and it is useless to dogmatize. "Let them be sea-captains, if they will," said Margaret Fuller, speaking only perhaps in some vague memory of readings in Herodotus, and of the deeds of Artemisia at Salamis; but, soon after, the newspapers were celebrating the name and fame of Miss Betsey Miller, captain for these dozen years of the Scotch brig *Cleotus*. Yet woman, it would appear, is "constitutionally disqualified for action." It would be pleasant to see the grave author of this phrase on board Captain Betsey's brig, beating into the port of Belfast in a gale of wind. It is to be feared, however, that he would be constitutionally disqualified for remaining above the hatches.

The test of sphere is success. If Miss Miller can walk the quarter-deck; if Madame Grange can argue cases in court; if Mrs. W—— can conduct the complex business transactions of a great Paris house; if Maria Mitchell can discover comets, and Harriet Hosmer carve statues; if Appolonia Jagiello can fight in one European revolution, and Mrs. Putnam vindicate another (besides having the gift of tongues); if Harriet Hunt can really cure diseases, and Lucretia Mott and Antoinette Brown can preach good sermons, and Mrs. Swisshelm and Mrs. Nichols edit able newspapers,—then all these are points gained forever, and the case is settled so far. Nor can any one of these be set aside as an exceptional case, until it is shown that it is not, on the other hand, a *test case*; each person being a possible specimen of a large class who would, with a little less discouragement, have done the same things.

That there are great discouragements, it is useless and ungenerous to deny. For every obstacle that a man of genius is admired for surmounting, a woman surmounts an hundred. If any one of the aforesaid women has attained to her position without actual resistance or ridicule, then *that* is the exception, for these things are the rule. Margaret Fuller's biographers did not stoop to tell the whole story of the petty insults and annoyances which she incurred, in the simple effort to take the place which belonged to her. Some critics have doubted the propriety of

Elizabeth Barrett's venturing to write such vigorous verses; woman should be "the lovely subject of poetry," these gallant gentlemen think, not its author; they do not, however contract for the production of the article from their own brains of a quality equivalent to the "Drama of Exile." Even *Punch* considers female physicians to be fair game; as if the wonder were not, that any delicate woman should employ any different attendance.

The first lesson usually impressed upon a girl is, that the object of her instruction is to make her pleasing and ornamental; but of her brother's, to make him wise and useful. Parents, pulpit and pedagogue, commonly teach her the same gospel. If she opens book or newspaper, she finds the same theory. I forget from what feeble journal I cut the following: "A sensible lady writes us as follows: 'Woman's true mission, about which so much has been written, is to make herself as charming and bewitching as possible to the gentlemen.'" Yet wherein is this worse than Milton's "He for God only, she for God in him"? We have but to turn to the books nearest at hand for abundant illustrations of the same thing.

"Women ought not to interfere in history," says an eminent writer, "for history demands action, and for action they are constitutionally disqualified!" Shades of Queen Bess and Margaret of Anjou, of the Countess of Derby, Flora McDonald, and Grace Darling!

"This difficult statement requires some explanation," says another, "if the reader be young, inexperienced, or a female."

Goethe said that "Dilettanti, and especially women, have but weak ideas of poetry."

It seems hardly credible that even Dr. Channing, in an essay "on Exclusion and Denunciation in Religion," should have reflected quite severely on "women forgetting the tenderness of their sex, and arguing on theology." For if, as a recent convention preacher declared, "among the redeemed, up to this time, an immense majority are women," one would suppose that their experimental knowledge of religious matters might partially counterbalance a trifling deficiency in the Hebrew tongue—which

is not, indeed, a quite universal accomplishment among the male sex.

It is strange to see that when men try to aim highest in their advice to women, they so seldom rise beyond this thought, that the position of woman is but secondary and relative. An eminent Boston teacher, who has done much for female education, astonished me when I read, in the "School and Schoolmaster," his unequal appeals for the school-boy and school-girl :

"That boy on yonder bench may be a Washington or a Marshall. * * * * That fair-haired girl may be" [what?—not a Guion or a Roland, an Edgeworth or a Somerville?—no, but] "the future *mother* of a Washington or a Marshall! By inspiring her heart with the highest principles, you may do much to advance humanity, by forming a sublime specimen of a just *man*." And so on.

I have heard the indignation expressed by young women on occasions like this; once, especially, after a Normal School examination, when this had been the burden of the addresses of the excellent gentlemen there present. "They all spoke," said the indignant girls, "as if the whole aim of a woman's existence was to be married; and we all wished that we might never be married, so as to prove that there were other noble duties in life for us, as well as for young men. They would not have spoken so to *them*."

Now, with this immense difference, that precisely where the stimulus is applied to young men, there the pressure of discouragement is laid on girls, it cannot be expected that the faculties of the latter for various employments should be developed with equal ease. The different functions suitable to women will be filled more slowly for the same reason that it takes twice as long to ascend the Ohio against the current, as to descend by its aid. But it has well been asked, "If woman's mind be really so feeble, why is she left to struggle alone with all those difficulties which are so sedulously removed from the path of man?"

There is, moreover, this inconvenience, that although greater strength may in certain cases be developed by this encounter with

prejudice, it is apt likewise to mar the symmetry and grace of the character; and hence the occasional charge of unfeminine unattractiveness against distinguished women. Mill, with his usual penetration, enumerates among common fallacies, the impression, that because one extraordinary member of a class is rendered conceited or offensive by the isolation, the whole class, if elevated, would show the same qualities. Make education and station accessible to all women, and the source of annoyance will disappear.

I repeat, however, that even the question of employments is a secondary one. The avocations of many men are as little stimulating to the intellectual nature as those of women. Comparatively few men are educated by their employments. The great educator of American men is the ballot-box, with its accompaniments.

By its accompaniments, I mean the whole world of public life, public measures, public interest and public office. From direct participation in this school of instruction the American woman is not only more rigidly excluded than the woman of any other Christian nation, but this takes place under circumstances of peculiar aggravation, precisely because more importance is attributed to this sphere among the Americans than elsewhere. It is a startling fact that, in the land where the right of political action is most universal, most prized, and most jealously guarded *among men*, it should be most scrupulously denied to women. In most European countries, the sexes stand nearly on a level in this respect; the distinction is not of sex, but of station. A few men can be kings, peers and prime ministers; a few women can be queens, regents and peeresses. The masses of both sexes are equally far removed from direct participation in public affairs, and hence woman, *as woman*, is neither degraded nor defrauded.

Indeed, some of the most eminent European statesmen and thinkers of the last century have argued against the principle of universal suffrage, on the ground that it must, if consistently established, include women also. This was the case, for instance, with Pitt and Coleridge. Talleyrand said, "To see one half of

the human race excluded by the other half from all participation in government, is a political phenomenon, which, on abstract principles, it is impossible to explain." "The principle of an aristocracy is admitted (says De Tocqueville) the moment we reject an absolutely universal suffrage."

On the other hand, among European democrats, — as Condorcet, Siéyès, Godwin, Bentham, and the authors of the People's Charter, — there has been the same ready recognition of the abstract right of woman to this prerogative.

And yet, in the United States, in which alone the experiment of democracy is claimed to have been tried; here, where all our institutions must stand or fall by their conformity to the idea of equal rights; here, where, moreover (says De Tocqueville again), "politics are existence, and exclusion from politics seems like exclusion from existence;" here, one half the race is still excluded. Tennyson sums it all up in his "Princess" —

"Millions of throats will bawl for Civil Rights;
— No woman named" !

Not to name her is, in a democratic government, to ignore her existence; and hence, one cannot be surprised to read, in one of the ablest commentaries on American institutions, the cool general remark, "In the Free States, except criminals and paupers, *there is no class of persons* who do not exercise the elective franchise." Women are not even a "class of persons;" they are fairly dropped from the human race; and very naturally, since we have grown accustomed to recognize an "*universal suffrage*" which does not include them.

It is no wonder that, under these circumstances, we Americans are remarkably polite to women. It will take a good many bows and delicate homages to atone for this unexpected result of free institutions, — leaving one half the population with less access to political power than they have under monarchies. With an awkward impulse of compensation, we attempt to atone for our fraud by courtesies. Withholding rights, we substitute favors. We rob woman of her claim to the soil she stands upon, and then beg

leave to offer her a chair. "Chivalry," said the brilliant German woman Rahel, "was a poetical *lie*, necessary to restore the equality of the sexes." Is our American chivalry of the same stamp?

That most fascinating of modern Catholic writers, Digby, brings it as a charge against republican institutions, that they are "in the highest degree inimical to the influence and importance of women." And it can easily be shown that the opportunity of females for public service is far less in the United States than in most of the nations of Europe; and that our civil institutions thus take from women just what they give to men.

In England, "in a reported case, it is stated by counsel, and substantially assented to by the court, that a woman is capable of serving in almost all the offices of the kingdom; such as those of queen, marshal, grand chamberlain, and constable of England, the champion of England, commissioner of sewers, governor of a workhouse, sexton, keeper of the prison, of the gate-house of the dean and chapter of Westminster, returning officer for members of parliament, and constable, the latter of which is in some respects judicial. The office of jailer is frequently exercised by a woman."

In an action at law, it has been determined that an unmarried woman, having a freehold, might vote for members of parliament; and it is recorded that Lady Packington returned two. The office of grand chamberlain, in 1822, was filled by two women; and that of clerk of the crown, in the court of queen's bench, has been granted to a female. In a certain parish of Norfolk, England, a woman was recently appointed parish clerk, because among a population of six hundred there was no man found who could read and write!

At the coronation of King Richard II., Dame Margaret Dimock, wife of Sir John Dimock, came into court and "claimed the place to be the king's champion, by the virtue of the tenure of her manor of Scrinelby, in Lincolnshire, to challenge and defy all such as opposed the king's right to the crown." The Countess of Pembroke, Dorset and Montgomery, had the office of hereditary sheriff of Westmoreland, and exercised it in person. At the

assizes at Appleby, she sat with the judges on the bench; as did also Lady Rous, in Suffolkshire, in the reign of Queen Anne, she being *cincta gladio*, girt with a sword, like the other magistrates.

In the reign of Henry VIII., when, during some family quarrels, Maurice Berkely and others entered the park of Lady Anne Berkely, at Yate, and committed depredations, the lady complained to the king, who immediately granted her a special commission under the great seal, to inquire into the matter. She then returned to Gloucester, opened the commission, sat on the bench in the public Sessions Hall, empanelled a jury, received evidence, and, finally, sentenced the rioters.

A statement has passed current, originating with Gilbert Stuart, to the effect that the Anglo-Saxon queens were accustomed to assist at the parliaments convoked by their husbands. But I have not been able to find confirmation of this in the authorities to which he refers — William of Malmesbury and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. It is not improbable, however, in view of the known fact, that during that period a prioress might preside over a meeting of ecclesiastics, and legislate for the government of the church; and might take precedence in rank in the assembly, as was the case in the council of Becanceld, convoked in the year 694.

It is a remarkable fact, that one of the most important treaties of modern Europe — the peace of Cambray, in 1529 — was negotiated exclusively by two women — Margaret, the aunt of Charles V., and Louisa, mother of Francis I. It is known in history as *Le Traité des Dames*, and is certainly a noble monument of the influence of woman, in a world where blessed are the peacemakers.

It is strange to turn from such a wide variety of public stations to the scanty provisions of our own nation. "In the United States," says Judge Hurlbut, "a woman may administer upon the estate of her deceased husband; and she has, occasionally, held a subordinate place in the Post-Office Department. She has, therefore, a sort of post-mortem and post-mistress notoriety; but, with the exception of handling letters administrative and letters mailed, she is the submissive creature of the old common law." This would

seem rather an inadequate result, for woman, of American Revolution, Declaration of Independence and Constitution; and even suggests doubtful comparisons with the days when "the Great Squaw Sachem" ruled the inhabitants of Eastern Massachusetts, from Mystic to Agawam.

It would seem that, under the circumstances, the rising protest of American women, though it may annoy men, can hardly surprise them. I have chosen to begin with the consideration of education, because that is a point commonly conceded, and, therefore, a good fulcrum for the lever. But much more remains behind. It is not the sole grievance of woman that she has not even her full share of school education.

Nor is the complaint only, that any system of "education" is utterly imperfect which provides for women only schools, and not functions.

Nor is it the whole of the grievance, that the employments easily accessible to women are few, unintellectual, and underpaid.

Nor is it all, that the denial of equal political rights, being an absolute wrong, must necessarily be in many ways a practical wrong. Is not each individual, male or female, an unit before God? Has not woman, equally with man, an individual body to be protected, and an individual soul to be saved? Must she not see, feel, know, speak, think, act for herself, and not through another? We hear much said of the value of the "franchise of a freeman," say women. But why should Franchise belong to Francis more than to Frances, when the three words are etymologically the same, and should be practically so,—all signifying, simply, Freedom? Nay, as things now stand, Frank may grow up a vulgar, ignorant ruffian, and Fanny may have the mental calibre and culture of Margaret Fuller, or the self-devoted energy of Dorothea Dix; yet it will make no difference. The man must count as one in the state, the woman counts zero; a ratio, as mathematicians agree, of *infinite* inferiority.

But this is not all. Nor is it all that this exclusion is a thing done without "the consent of the governed." "The body politic

(says the Massachusetts Constitution) is formed by a voluntary association of individuals." Accordingly, we think it a daring responsibility to hold a constitutional convention, or even to pass a liquor law, without a popular vote thereon. When was the popular vote taken in which women relinquished even the rights conceded to them by their English ancestors? By the last census, there is a clear majority of women over men in this commonwealth. Have this majority consented to their present subjection? No, they have had no opportunity to consent; they have never been asked; they have only *acquiesced*, as the black majority in South Carolina acquiesce, because that very subjection has made them both ignorant and timid.

Nor is it all, that we lose the services of the purest half of the human race from our public offices. Not one of these admirable women whom I have just named may have a direct voice in legislating for a hospital or a prison; not one of these accomplished ones can have a place in even a school-committee; though in despotic France the official superintendence of primary schools, at least, is placed in female hands.

Nor is it all, that female labor thus loses that guarantee of protection, which political economy has always recognized as an important feature of free institutions. "To give energy to industrial enterprise," says one American writer, unconscious of the covert satire, "the dignity of labor should be sustained; the franchise of a freeman should be granted to the humblest laborer who has not forfeited his right by crime. In the responsibilities of a freeman he will find the strongest motives to exertion. Besides, so far as government can by its action affect his confidence of a just remuneration for his toil, he feels that a remedy is put in his hands by the ballot-box." Indeed, John Neal asserts that the right of suffrage is worth fifty cents a day, in its effect upon the wages of male laborers, in this country. But where are all these encouragements for women?

Nor is it all, that, with the right to labor, all the other rights of woman, as to person and property, are equally endangered by this exclusion from direct power.

For the great grievance, alleged by all women who make complaint of grievances, is this: that all these details are but part of a *system*, which lies at the basis of all our organizations, assumes at the outset the inferiority of woman, merges every married woman in her husband, and imposes upon every single woman the injustice of taxation without representation, and of subjection to laws which she has no share in framing.

It is impossible to frame statements on this subject stronger than those contained in the commonest law-books.

“ Husband and wife (says Blackstone) are held to be one person in law, so that the very being and existence of the woman is suspended during the coverture, or entirely merged and incorporated in that of the husband.”

Nor is this to be an empty claim. “ The husband has the right (says another legal authority) of imposing such corporeal restraints as he may deem necessary for securing to himself the fulfilment of the obligations imposed on the wife. He may, in the plenitude of his power, adopt every act of physical coercion which does not endanger the life or health of the wife.”

“ In short (says Judge Hurlbut), a woman is courted and wedded as an angel, and yet denied the dignity of a rational and moral being ever after.”

The protest of women, therefore, is not against a special abuse, but against a whole system of injustice; and the peculiar importance of political suffrage to woman is only because it seems to be the symbol of all her rights. Once recognize the political equality of the sexes, and all the questions of legal, social, educational and professional equality, will soon settle themselves.

It is not to be denied that the subject is coming rapidly into discussion, and bids fair to be ably handled. On the one side have been a series of conventions, speeches, and pamphlets, proceeding from a remarkable band of women, who have astonished all intelligent observers by the mental and moral ability they have displayed. On the other side are the fixed observances of church and state; nearly every stripling editor in the land has winged

his goose-quill in defence of established institutions; reverend divines have quoted Scripture, and grave professors quoted Aristophanes; and nothing has been left undone, except to reprint old John Knox's tract of A. D. 1553, entitled "Blast of a Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women."

It is an unfortunate thing for this last party that each of their arguments has grown odious by its long previous use in defence of every oligarchy and every slavery. The rebellious females are assured, first, that they do not really wish for any further political rights; second, that they do not need them; third, that they are not fit for them. To which the fair malcontents reply — like malcontents in all ages, fair or foul — first, that they know what they wish; second, that they know what they need; third, that they know what they are fit for, and intend to secure it.

I. Upon the first point, I can only here say, that men have, as men, nothing to do with it. This essay is entitled, "Woman and her Wishes," because I conceive that to be, *for men*, the main point at issue. The final choice must be made by women themselves. The final question must be, What does woman, after all, desire? It may be still as difficult to ascertain this, as in the days of the wandering knight, in the old English legend; but it is essential. I do not understand, however, that any man is called upon to settle this question. We are not to interfere, except to secure fair play. I have not heard that the most ardent apostles have proposed to compel any woman to make stump-speeches against her will; or march a fainting sisterhood to the polls, under a police in Bloomer costume. Let there be only fair play. The highest demand of each; that is her destiny. "Let them be sea-captains, *if they will*," and that is all.

II. Upon the second point, that women do not *need* additional civil rights, there is more to be said.

I do not understand it to be asserted, by any one, that women have no influence, because they have no direct political power. Margaret Fuller is right on this point; "it needs only that she be a good cook, or a good scold, to secure her *influence*, if that were all." There never was a time when she had not this,

however totally the theory of society may have excluded her. Demosthenes confessed that "measures which the statesman has meditated a whole year, may be overturned in a day by a woman." The shrewd Ganganelli (Pope Clement XIV.) said well that "many women who appeared only as the wives of princes or ambassadors, and who are not even mentioned in history, have frequently been the cause of the grandest exploits. Their counsels have prevailed, and the husbands have had all the honor due to the sagacity of their wives." And Montesquieu complains of those who "judge of a government by the men at the head of affairs, and not also by the women who sway those men." "*Soignez les femmes,*" Napoleon used to say, to his emissaries; "Look to the women!"

It is upon a different ground that the complaint proceeds. "Woman should not merely have a share in the power of man, — for of that omnipotent Nature will not suffer her to be defrauded, — but it should be a *chartered* power, too fully recognized to be abused." "It is always best (remarks another advocate) to add open responsibility, where there must at any rate be concealed power."

The half-forgotten satirist, Churchill, has stated the distinction very well, in describing a period of political degeneracy.

"Women ruled all, and counsellors of state
Were at the doors of women forced to wait;
Women, who 've oft as sovereigns graced the land,
But never governed well at second hand."

If historical demonstrations were needed, it would be enough to point to the wide difference between the long line of titled harlots who secretly ruled France, under the Salique law, and the noble female sovereigns of England, Spain and Germany. Montespan and Pompadour against Elizabeth, Isabella and Maria Theresa! It was only the last struggles of the French monarchy which brought forth that type of all womanly nobleness, Madame Roland.

The question lies here. Woman must have influence somehow; shall she have it simply, directly, openly, responsibly? — or, on

the other hand, by coaxings, caresses, dimples, dinners, fawnings, frownings, frettings, and lectures after the manner of Mrs. Caudle? It is possibly true, as Miss Bremer's heroine says, that a woman may obtain anything she wishes of her husband, by always keeping something nice to pop into his mouth; but it is quite questionable whether such a relation can rank any higher in the scale of creation than the loves of Nutcracker and Sugar Dolly in the German tale.

Besides, there is this fatal difficulty, that woman, with all her powers of domestic coaxing and coercion, has never yet coaxed or coerced her partner into doing her simple justice. Shall we never get beyond the absurd theory that every woman is legally and politically represented by her husband, and hence has an adequate guarantee? The answer is, that she has been so represented ever since representation began; and the result appears to be, that, among the Anglo-Saxon race generally, the entire system of laws in regard to woman is at this moment so utterly wrong, that Lord Brougham is reported to have declared it useless to attempt to amend it; "there must be a total reconstruction, before a woman can have any justice."

The wrong lies not so much in any special statute, as in the fundamental theory of the law. Yet no candid man can read the statutes on this subject, of the most enlightened nation, without admitting that they were obviously made by *man*, — not with a view to woman's interest, but to his own. Our Massachusetts laws may not be so bad as the law repealed in Vermont in 1850, which *confiscated to the state* one half the property of every childless widow, unless the husband had other heirs. But they must compel from every generous person the admission, that neither justice nor gallantry has yet availed to procure anything like impartiality in the legal provisions for the two sexes. With what decent show of justice, then, can man, thus dishonored, claim a continuance of this suicidal confidence?

There is something respectable in the frank barbarism of the old Russian nuptial consecration, "Here, wolf, take thy lamb." But we cannot easily extend the same charity to the civilized wolf

of England and America, clad in the sheep's clothing of a volume of Revised Statutes; — caressing the person of the bride, and devouring her property.

For, I believe that our laws do give some protection to the person, and that our courts would hardly sustain the opinion of the English Justice Buller, that the husband might lawfully "correct" his wife with a stick not larger than his thumb — "so great a favorite is the female sex of the laws of England," as Blackstone says. Yet, if he should do so, I see but an imperfect remedy. For, no woman's cause had ever a trial by a jury of her peers; she may not even have half the jury composed of such as herself, though this privilege is given to foreigners under the English laws. And the wrongs of the outraged wife, or the bereaved mother, can only be redressed by a masculine tribunal.

It was thought very ludicrous when the female petitioners in New York craved permission to address the Assembly in person, instead of leaving their cause to men. But I apprehend that if that change were made here, the spectacle would not again be seen of a bill to protect the property of married women being refused a third reading, by a large majority, in the Massachusetts House of Representatives, "after a considerable discussion, *mostly of a humorous description.*"

"The perfection of woman's character," said Coleridge, "is to be characterless. Every man would like to have an Ophelia or a Desdemona for a wife." This last proposition is perhaps too universal a statement; yet grant it, and the sad question still recurs, "But what was the *fate* of Ophelia and Desdemona?"

III. To the third suggestion, that woman is not *fitted* for any additional political rights, there is much to be said; and yet little that has not been better said by females themselves.

1. For instance, it can hardly be seriously urged that women are not qualified to vote intelligently, since the direct and irresistible protest lately made by the petitioners to the Massachusetts Constitutional Convention:

"It would be a disgrace to our schools and civil institutions to argue that a Massachusetts woman, who has enjoyed the full benefit of all their culture,

is not as competent to form an opinion on civil matters, as the illiterate foreigner, landed but a few years before upon our shores, unable to read or write, not free from early prejudices, and little acquainted with our institutions. Yet such *men* are allowed to vote."

2. Another argument is met as explicitly by a resolution of the first Woman's Rights Convention in Worcester :

"*Resolved*, That it is as absurd to deny all women their civil rights because the cares of household and family take up all the time of some, as it would be to exclude the whole male sex from Congress, because some men are sailors, or soldiers, in active service, or merchants, whose business requires all their attention and energies."

3. It is said that women are not now familiar with political affairs. Certainly they are not, for they have no stimulus to be. Give them the same motive for informing themselves, and the natural American appetite for newspapers will be developed as readily in women as in men.

4. There is fear of undue publicity. "Place woman, unbanded and unshawled, before the public gaze (wrote the fastidious critic of the New York *Christian Inquirer*), and what becomes of her modesty, her virtue?" But surely the question of publicity is already settled, to the utmost extent. At least, every man must be silent who acquiesces in the concert, the drama, or the opera. I will not dwell on the exposures of the stage, or the indelicacies of the ballet. But if Jenny Lind was "an angel of purity and benevolence," for consenting to stand, chanting and enchanting, before three thousand excited admirers; if Madame Sontag could give a full-dress rehearsal (which does not commonly imply a superfluity of apparel) for the special edification of the clergy of Boston, and be rewarded with duplicate Bibles; it is really hard to see why a humble woman in a Quaker dress — yes, or any other — may not bear her testimony against sin, before as large an audience as can be assembled to hear her.

"O, but," men say, "it seems different, somehow, to hear a Quaker woman speak in public!" Yes, but *is* it different? Are right and reason to depend on the color of a dress? It has been

said that "a saint in crape is twice a saint in lawn." But why is a drab-colored Amazon more tolerable than any other?

We repress a woman's tongue in public, and then complain that she uses it disproportionately in private. But if she has anything worth saying in the one case, why not in the other? Surely there is no want of physical power. Jenny Lind can fill as large a concert-room as Lablache. Nay, there is another aspect to the argument. Often, at conventions of men, amid the roughness and the gruffness, the stammering and the hesitating, when I have recalled to memory the clear, delicious voice of Lucy Stone, 'gentle and low, an excellent thing in woman,' yet penetrating with its quiet fascination to the utmost corners of the largest hall, — never loud to the nearest, never faint to the furthest, and bearing on its quiet current all pure womanly thoughts and noble aspirations, — I have almost wondered at the tolerance of Paul in suffering a *man* to speak in public.

And let those who, even after this, cling to the idle thought that such a public career is incompatible with the more modest graces (which are becoming, not to feminine character only, but to human character), — let such persons read the stainless record of Elizabeth Fry's inner life, in the most intoxicating periods of her career:

"It was indeed an act of faith," says her journal, in describing a public address; "I have a feeling of unfitness and unworthiness for these services, more than I can express. On entering the assembly, I hardly dared look up; when I did, I thought there must be fifteen hundred persons present; but I may, I think, say is was, before I ended, a glorious time; the power of the Good Spirit appeared to reign over us."

5. But the great anxiety, after all, seems to be for the dinner. Men insist, like the German Jean Paul, on having a wife who shall cook them something good. I confess to some sympathy with these. I, too, wish to save the dinner. Yet it seems more important, after all, to save the soul. It is a significant fact, that several female authors, as Mrs. Child and Miss Leslie, have had to *work their passage* into literature by compiling cookery-books

first; just as Miss Martineau thinks it well to vindicate Mrs. Somerville's right to use the telescope, by proving that she has an eye to the tea-table also. Let us consent to this, and only supplicate that after the cookery book is written, and the table set, the soul of the woman may be considered as free. Let us value the dinner, for it is well that labor should have its material basis, as life has; but let us remember that a woman who provides for that, and that only, is, after all, but a half-woman, of whom Mrs. Jellyby is the other half.

It is to be admitted, however, that among the "domestic virtues" there are functions nobler than the culinary department. Yet how strange the blindness that hopes to educate these by crushing all other faculties! And how strange a narrowness of estimate is often left, even after this blindness is partially removed! For instance, some critic said, after speaking very cordially of Mrs. Mill's able article on the "Enfranchisement of Woman," in the *Westminster Review*, that "it was to be hoped, however, that the mother of John Stuart Mill would always regard it as her chief honor to have reared her distinguished son." But, in the name of common sense, why so? Is it not as much to *be* an useful woman as to rear an useful man? Why postpone the honor from generation to generation? or when will it be overtaken? Or, rather, what incompatibility between parental and social duties? The father may be as important in the rearing of the child as the mother (indeed, Jean Paul says, with exquisite truthfulness, that the mother marks the commas and semicolons in the son's life, but the father the colons and periods); yet it is not considered the whole duty of man to be a good father. John Adams contrived to train John Quincy Adams, and to be a parent and guardian of American liberty likewise; why should woman content herself with one half the mission?

And there are facts enough to vindicate my position. Victoria is at the head of a kingdom and of a household, — and neither of them a small one; and she fulfils both vocations well. The most eminent of American Quakers stated it to me, as the general experience of this body, that the female members most publicly

useful are also the best wives and mothers. Certainly, the twenty-five grandchildren of Elizabeth Fry rose up to call her blessed none the less because she was the valued adviser of all the leading British statesmen, and the guest or correspondent of half the sovereigns of Europe. Nay, it is touching to read that, in the very height of her public labors, "Mrs. Fry's maternal experience led her to give some advice about the babies' dress (at the Paris *Enfants Trouvés*), that it might afford them more liberty of movement."

6. In the disorder now sometimes exhibited at our caucuses and town-meetings, there is plainly an argument, not for the exclusion, but for the admission of women. They have been excluded quite too long. Observe the altered character of public dinners since their admission there, which yet would have seemed as objectionable to our grandfathers. Such is my faith in the moral power of woman, that I fear we cannot spare her from these scenes of temptation. There was wisdom in that hearty recognition given by a party of rough California miners to some brave New England women who were crossing the isthmus, in the rainy season, to join their husbands. "Three cheers," said they, "for the ladies who *have come to make us better!*"

We need the feminine element in our public affairs to make us better. I cannot agree with those who deny that there are certain differences of temperament between the sexes. God has a great purpose in these; let us not deny them, nor let us waste them. It is precisely these feminine attributes which we need in *all* the spheres of life. Wherever the experiment has been tried (as among the Quakers) it has proved successful; it will yet be tried further. The noble influence of Manuelita Rosas, in Paraguay, over the policy of the stern dictator, her father, is but a hint of what is yet to come, when such influences shall be openly legitimated. Woman, as a class, may be deceived, but not wholly depraved; society may impair her sense, but not her self-devotion. Her foot has been cramped in China, and her head everywhere; but her heart is uncramped. We need in our politics and our society a little more heart. The temperance movement would lie

dormant in many of our towns, but for the sympathies and energies of women. The anti-slavery movement had hardly made its way to the masses till a woman undertook to explain it. And the western editor's objection to the "Woman's Rights movement" seems to me to be one of its strong points; that, "if it should prevail, we may yet see some Mrs. Stowe in the presidential chair."

It sounds strangely to American ears to hear of a woman as head of a nation. But our English ancestors, three centuries ago, living under the government of a woman, would have been equally astonished to hear of a commoner as being at the head of a nation. Any innovation seems daring until it is made, and when once made it is called an "institution," and then any further change is daring.

The fatal inconsistency of those who protest against any innovation in the position of woman lies in the fact that they have tolerated so many innovations already. Once admit that she has been wronged, and the question then recurs, whether she has yet been fully righted. We have conceded too much to refuse further concessions. She must be a slave or an equal; there is no middle ground. If it is plainly reasonable that the two sexes shall study together in the same high school, then it cannot be hopelessly ridiculous that they should study together in college also. If it is common sense to make a woman deputy postmaster, then it cannot be the climax of absurdity to make her postmaster-general, or even the higher officer who is the postmaster's master. Methinks I hear again the old shout of the nobles at Prague, "*Moriemur pro rege nostro — Harriet Beecher!*"

Is it feared lest there be a confusion in the nature of the two sexes, from these wild propositions? But nature commonly provides adequate means in seeking an end. If distinctions are not strong enough to protect themselves, it is useless to try to guard them. Lucy Stone said, "woman's nature is stamped and sealed by the Creator, and there is no danger of her unsexing herself, while his eye watches her." Nature has everything to dread from constraint, nothing from liberty. The only demand of our female reformers is to be set free. Beyond that, let all decisions be made by those whose business it is. "Woman and

her Wishes" is the title of this essay, not woman controlled by the wishes of man. As the powers of the body are divided between the sexes (physicians say), giving man the greater power of exertion, and woman the greater power of endurance, so it can hardly be doubted that a shading of difference, without inferiority, runs through all the spiritual natures of women and of men. Of these let there be an union such as God joins and man cannot put asunder; an equal union of hearts, of homes, of lives, of rights, of powers; not tyranny on the one side, disguised as courtesy,—nor criminal self-extinction on the other side, where God demands only a noble and mutual self-consecration.

“Then reign the world’s great bridals, chaste and calm,
Then springs the crowning race of human kind.”

APPENDIX.

REMARKS OF REV. T. W. HIGGINSON

BEFORE THE COMMITTEE OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION ON THE QUALIFICATION OF VOTERS, JUNE 3, 1853.

[The question being on the petition of Abby B. Alcott, and other women of Massachusetts, that they may be permitted to vote on the amendments that may be made to the Constitution.]

I NEED hardly suggest to the Committee the disadvantage under which I appear before them, in coming to glean after three of the most eloquent voices in this community, or any other [LUCY STONE, WENDELL PHILLIPS and THEODORE PARKER],—in doing this, moreover, without having heard all their arguments, and in a fragment of time at the end of a two hours' sitting. I have also the minor disadvantage of gleaning after myself, having just ventured to submit a more elaborate essay on this subject, in a different form, to the notice of the Convention.

I shall therefore abstain from all debate upon the general question, and confine myself to the specific point now before this Committee. I shall waive all inquiry as to the right of women to equality in education, in occupations, or in the ordinary use of the elective franchise. The question before this Committee is not whether women shall become legal voters—but whether they shall have power to say, once for all, whether they *wish* to become legal voters. Whether, in one word, they desire to accept this Constitution which the Convention is framing.

It is well that the question should come up in this form, since the one efficient argument against the right of women to vote, in ordinary cases, is the plea that they do not wish to do it. "Their whole nature revolts at it." Very well; these petitioners simply

desire an opportunity for Massachusetts women to say whether their nature *does* revolt at it or no.

The whole object of this Convention, as I heard stated by one of its firmest advocates, is simply this — to “make the Constitution of Massachusetts consistent with its own first principles.” This is all these petitioners demand. Give them the premises which are conceded in our existing Bill of Rights, or even its Preamble, and they ask no more. I shall draw my few weapons from this source. I know that this document is not binding upon your Convention; nothing is binding upon you but eternal and absolute justice, and my predecessor has taken care of the claims of *that*. But the Bill of Rights is still the organic law of this state, and I can quote no better authority for those principles which lie at the foundation of all that we call republicanism.

I. My first citation will be from the Preamble, and will establish as Massachusetts doctrine the principle of the Declaration of Independence, that all government owes its just powers to the consent of the governed.

“The end of the institution, maintenance and administration of government, is to secure the existence of the body politic. * * * The body politic is formed by a *voluntary association of individuals*; it is a social compact, by which *the whole people covenants with each citizen* and each citizen with the whole people, that all shall be governed by certain laws for the common good. * * * * It is the duty of the people, therefore, in framing a constitution of government, to provide for an *equitable mode of making laws*, as well as for an impartial interpretation and a faithful execution of them,” &c. &c.

Now, women are “individuals;” women are a part of “the people;” women are “citizens,” for the Constitution elsewhere distinguishes *male* citizens. This clause, then, concedes precisely that which your petitioners claim. Observe how explicit it is. The people are not merely to have good laws, well administered; but they must have an equitable mode of making those laws. The reason of this is, that good laws are no permanent security, unless enacted by equitable methods. Your laws may be the best ever

devised; yet still they are only given as a temporary favor, not held as a right, unless the whole people are concerned in their enactment. It is the old claim of despots—that their laws are good. When they told Alexander of Russia that his personal character was as good as a constitution for his people, “then,” said he, “I am but a lucky accident.” Your constitution may be never so benignant to woman, but that is only a lucky accident, unless you concede the claim of these women to have a share in creating it. Nothing else “is an equitable mode of making laws.” But it is too late to choose female delegates to your Convention, and the only thing you can do is to allow women to vote on the acceptance of its results. The claim of these petitioners may be unexpected, but it is logically irresistible. If you do not wish it to be renewed, you must remember either to alter or abrogate your Bill of Rights; for the petition is based on that.

The last speaker called this movement a novelty. Not entirely so. The novelty is partly the other way. In Europe, women have direct political power; witness Victoria. It is a false democracy which has taken it away. In my more detailed argument, I have cited many instances of these foreign privileges. In monarchical countries the dividing lines are not of sex, but of rank. A plebeian woman has no political power—nor has her husband. Rank gives it to man, and also, in a degree, to woman. But among us the only rank is of sex. Politically speaking, in Massachusetts, all men are patrician, all women plebeian. All men are equal, in having direct political power; and all women are equal—in having none. And women lose by democracy precisely that which men gain. Therefore I say this disfranchisement of woman, as woman, is a novelty. It is a new aristocracy; for, as De Tocqueville says, wherever one class has peculiar powers, as such, there is aristocracy and oligarchy.

We see the result of this in our general mode of speaking of woman. We forget to speak of her as an individual being—only as a thing. A political writer coolly says, that in Massachusetts; “except criminals and paupers, there is *no class of persons* who do not exercise the elective franchise.” Women are not even a “class

of persons"! And yet, most readers would not notice this extraordinary omission. I talked the other day with a young radical preacher about his new religious organization. Who votes under it? said I. "O," (he said, triumphantly) "we go for progress and liberty; anybody and everybody votes." "What!" said I, "women?" "No," said he, rather startled; "I did not think of *them* when I spoke." Thus quietly do we all talk of "anybody and everybody," and omit half the human race. Indeed, I read in the newspaper, this morning, of some great festivity, that "all the world and his wife" would be there! Women are not a part of the world — but only its "wife." They are not even "the rest of mankind;" they are womankind! All these things show the results of that inconsistency with the first principles of our Constitution of which the friends of this Convention justly complain.

II. So much for the general statement of the Massachusetts Bill of Rights, in its Preamble. But one clause is even more explicit. In section 9, I find the following:

"All the inhabitants of this Commonwealth, having such qualifications as they shall establish by their form of government, have an equal right to elect officers," &c.

As "they" shall establish. Who are *they*? Manifestly, the inhabitants as a whole. No part can have power, except by the consent of the whole — so far as that consent is practicable. Accordingly, you submit your Constitution for ratification — to whom? Not to the inhabitants of the state, — not even to a majority of the native adult inhabitants; for it is estimated that at any given moment, — in view of the great number of men emigrating to the West, to California, or absent on long voyages, — the majority of the population of Massachusetts is female. You disfranchise the majority, then; the greater part of "the inhabitants" have no share in establishing the form of government, or assigning the qualifications of voters. What worse can you say of any oligarchy? True, your aristocracy is a large one — almost a majority, you may say. But so, in several European nations, is nobility almost in a majority, and you almost hire a nobleman to black your shoes; they are as cheap as Generals and Colonels in New

England. But the principle is the same, whether the privileged minority consists of one or one million.

Is it said that a tacit consent has been hitherto given, by the absence of open protest? The same argument may be used concerning the black majority in South Carolina. Besides, your new Constitution is not yet made, and there has been no opportunity to assent to it. It will not be identical with the old one; but, even if it were, you propose to ask a renewed consent from men, and why not from women? Is it because a lady's "Yes" is always so fixed a certainty, that it never can be transformed to a "No," at a later period?

But I am compelled, by the fixed period of adjournment (ten A. M.), to cut short my argument, as I have been already compelled to condense it. I pray your consideration for the points I have urged. Believe me, it is easier to ridicule the petition of these women than to answer the arguments which sustain it. And, as the great republic of ancient times did not blush to claim that laws and governments were first introduced by Ceres, a woman, so I trust that the representatives of this noblest of modern commonwealths may not be ashamed to receive legislative suggestions from even female petitioners.



THE
RESPONSIBILITIES OF WOMAN.

A SPEECH BY
Clarina *Howard*
MRS. C. I. H. NICHOLS,

AT THE
WOMAN'S RIGHTS CONVENTION,
WORCESTER, OCTOBER 15, 1851.

MY FRIENDS, I have made no preparation to address you. I left home, feeling that, if I had anything to do here, I should have the grace given me to do it; or if there should be any branch of the subject not sufficiently presented, I would present it. And now, friends, in following so many speakers, who have so well occupied the ground, I will come as a gleaner, and be as a Ruth among my fellow-laborers.

I commenced life with the most refined notions of woman's sphere. My pride of womanhood lay within this nice sphere. I know not how it was, — perhaps because I am of mountain growth, — but I could, even then, see over the barriers of that sphere, and see that, however easy it might be for *me* to keep within it, as a daughter, a great majority of women were outside its boundaries; driven thither by their own, or invited by the necessities and interests of those they loved. I saw our farmers' wives, — women esteemed for every womanly virtue, — impelled by emergencies, helping their husbands in labors excluded from the modern woman's sphere. I was witness, on one occasion, to a wife's help-

ing her husband — who was ill and of feeble strength, and too poor to hire — to pile the logs, preparatory to clearing the ground that was to grow their daily bread ; and my sympathies, which recognized in her act the self-sacrificing love of woman, forbade that I should judge her out of her sphere. For I felt in my heart that, if I were a wife and loved my husband, I, too, would help him when he needed help, even if it were to *roll logs* ; and what true-hearted woman would not do the same ?

But, friends, it is only since I have met the varied responsibilities of life, that I have comprehended woman's sphere ; and I have come to regard it as lying within the whole circumference of humanity. If, as is claimed by the most ultra opponents of the wife's legal individuality, claimed as a conclusive argument in favor of her legal nonentity, the *interests of the parties are identical*, then I claim, as a legitimate conclusion, that their spheres are also identical. For interests determine duties, and duties are the landmarks of spheres. Wherever a man may *rightfully go*, it is proper that woman should go, and share his responsibilities. Wherever my husband goes, thither would I follow him, if to the battle-field. No, I would not follow him *there* ; I would hold him back by his coat-skirts, and say, " Husband, this is wrong. What will you gain by war ? It will cost as much money to fight for a bag of gold, or a lot of land, as it will to pay the difference ; and if you fight, our harvests are wasted, our hearths made desolate, our homes filled with sorrow, and vice and immorality roll back upon us from the fields of human slaughter." This is the way I would follow my husband where he cannot rightfully go.

But I may not dwell longer on woman's *sphere*. I shall say very little of woman's *rights* ; but I would lay the axe at the root of the tree. I would impress upon you woman's *responsibilities*, and the means fitly to discharge them before Heaven.

I stand before you, a wife, a mother, a sister, a daughter ; filling every relation that it is given to woman to fill. And by the token that I have a husband, a father and brothers, whom I revere for their manliness, and love for their tenderness, I may speak to you with confidence, and say, I respect manhood. I love it when

it aspires to the high destiny which God has opened to it. And it is because I have confidence in manhood, that I am here to press upon it the claims of womanhood. My first claim for woman is the means of education, that she may understand and be able to meet her responsibilities.

We are told very much of "Woman's *Mission*." Well, every mission supposes a missionary. Every missionary whom God sends out, every being who is called of God to labor in the vineyard of humanity, recognizes his call before the world does. Not the world — not even God's chosen people — recognized the mission of his Son, till he had proclaimed that mission, and sealed it with his dying testimony. And the world has not yet fully recognized the saving power of the mission of Jesus Christ. Now, if woman has a mission, she must first feel the struggle of the missionary in her own soul, and reveal it to her brother man, before the world will comprehend her claims, and accept her mission. Let her, then, say to man, "Here, God has committed to *me* the little tender infant to be developed in *body* and *mind* to the maturity of manhood, womanhood, and I am ignorant of the means for accomplishing either. Give me knowledge, instruction, that I may develop its powers, prevent disease, and teach it the laws of its mental and physical organism." It is you, fathers, husbands, who are responsible for this instruction; your happiness is equally involved with ours. Yourselves must reap the harvest of our ignorance or knowledge. If we suffer, you suffer also; both must suffer or rejoice in our mutual offspring.

I have introduced this subject of woman's responsibilities, that I might, if possible, impress upon you a conviction of the expediency and duty of yielding our right to the means that will enable us to be the helpers of men, in the true sense of helpers. A gentleman said to me, not long since, "I like your woman's rights, since I find it is the right of women to be good for something and help their husbands." Now, I do not understand the term helpmeet, as applied to woman, to imply all that has come to be regarded as within its signification. I do not understand that we are at liberty to help men to the devil. (Loud cheering.) I

believe it is our mission to help them heavenward, to the full development and right enjoyment of their being.

I would say, in reference to the rights of woman, it has come to be forgotten that, as the mother of the race, her rights are the rights of men also, the rights of her *sons*. As a mother, I may speak to you, freemen, *fathers*, of the rights of my sons — of every mother's sons — to the most perfect and vigorous development of their energies which the mother can secure to them by the application and through the use of *all* her God-given powers of body or of mind. It is in behalf of our sons, the future men of the republic, as well as for our daughters, its future mothers, that we claim the full development of our energies by education, and legal protection in the control of all the issues and profits of ourselves, called *property*.

As a parent, I have educated myself with reference to the wants of my children, that if, by the bereavements of life, I am left their sole parent, I can train them to be good and useful citizens. Such bereavement *has* left me the sole parent of sons by a first marriage. And how do the laws of the state protect the right of these sons to their mother's fostering care? The laws say that, having married again, I am a *legal nonentity*, and cannot "*give bonds*" for the faithful discharge of my maternal duties; therefore I shall not be their guardian. Having, in the first instance, robbed me of the property qualification for giving bonds, alienating my right to the control of my own earnings, the state makes its own injustice the ground for defrauding myself and children of the mutual benefits of our God-ordained relations; and others, destitute of every qualification and motive which my mother's love insures to them, may "*give bonds*" and become the legal guardians of my children!

I address myself to you, *fathers*, I appeal to every man who has lived a half-century, if the *mother* is not the most faithful guardian of her children's interests? If you were going on a long journey, to be absent for years, in the prosecution of business, or in the army or navy would you exclude your wives from the care and guardianship of your children? Would you place them and

the means for their support in any other hands than the mother's? If you would, *you have married beneath yourselves.* (Cheers.) Then I ask you how it happens that, when you die, your estates are cut up, and your children, and the means for their support, consigned to others' guardianship, by laws which yourselves have made or sworn to defend? Do you reply that women are not qualified by education for the business transactions involved in such guardianship? It is for this I ask that they may be educated. Yourselves must educate your wives in the conduct of your business. My friends, *love* is the best teacher in the world. Fathers, husbands, you do not know how fast you can teach, nor what apt scholars you will find in your wives and daughters, if, with loving confidences, you call them to your aid, and teach them those things in which they can aid you, and acquire the knowledge, which is "power," to benefit those they love. Would it not soothe your sick bed, would it not pluck thorns from your dying pillow, to confide in your wife that she could conduct the business on which your family relies for support, and, in case of your death, keep your children together, and educate them to go out into the world with habits of self-reliance and self-dependence? And do you know that, in withholding from your companions the knowledge and inducements which would fit them thus to share your cares, and relieve you in the emergencies of business, you deny them the richest rewards of affection? for "*it is more blessed to give than to receive.*" Do you know that they would only cling the closer to you in the stern conflicts of life, if they were thus taught that you do not undervalue their devotion and despise their ability? Call woman to your side in the loving confidence of equal interests and equal responsibilities, and she will never fail you.

But I would return to woman's responsibilities, and the laws that alienate her means to discharge them. And here let me call your attention to my position, that *the law which alienates the wife's right to the control of her own property, her own earnings, lies at the foundation of all her social and legal wrongs.* I have already shown you how the alienation of this right defrauds her of the legal guardianship of her children, in case of the father's

death. I need not tell you, who see it every day in the wretched family of the drunkard, that it defrauds her of the means of discharging her responsibilities to her children and to society during the husband's life, when he proves recreant to his obligations, and consumes her earnings in the indulgence of idle and sinful habits. I know it is claimed by many, as a reason why this law should not be disturbed, that it is only the wives of reckless and improvident husbands who suffer under its operation. But, friends, I stand here prepared to show that, as an unjust law of general application, it is even more fruitful of suffering to the wives of what are called *good* husbands, — husbands who love and honor their wives while living, but, dying, leave them and their maternal sympathies to the dissecting-knife of the law. I refer you to the legal provision for the widow. The law gives her the *use* only of one third of the estate which they have accumulated by their joint industry. I speak of the real estate; for, in the majority of estates, the personal property is expended in paying the debts and meeting the expenses of settlement. Now, I appeal to any man here, whose estate is sufficient to support either or both in comfort, and give them Christian burial, and yet is so limited that the *use* of one third of it will support neither, whether his wife's interests are equally protected with his own, by the laws which "settle" his estate in the event of his dying first. Let me tell you a story to illustrate the "support" which, it is claimed, compensates the wife for the alienation of her earnings to the control of the husband. In my native town lived a single sister, of middle age. She had accumulated something, for she was capable in all the handicrafts pursued by women of her class. She married a worthy man, poor in this world's goods, and whose children were all settled in homes of their own. She applied her means, and, by the persevering use of her faculties, they secured a snug home, valued at some five hundred dollars, he doing what his feeble health permitted towards the common interest. In the course of years he died, and two thirds of that estate was divided among *his* grown-up children; one third remaining to her. No, she could only have the *use* of one third, and must keep it in good repair, — the *law* said so!

The use of less than two hundred dollars in a homestead, on condition of "*keeping it in good repair*," was the *legal* pittance of this poor woman, to whom, with the infirmities of age, had come the desolation of utter bereavement! The old lady patched and toiled, beautiful in her scrupulous cleanliness. The neighbors remembered her, and many a choice bit found its way to her table. At length she was found in her bed paralyzed; and never, to the day of her death, — three years, — could she lift her hand or make known the simplest want of her nature; and yet her countenance was agonized with the appeals of a clear and sound intellect. And now, friends, how did the laws support and protect this poor widow? I will tell you. *They set her up at auction, and struck her off to the man who had a heart to keep her at the cheapest rate!* Three years she enjoyed the pauper's support, then died; and when the decent forms of a pauper's burial were over, *that third* was divided — as had been the other two thirds — among her husband's "well-to-do" children. (Great sensation.) And is it for *such* protection that the love of fathers, brothers, husbands, "represents" woman in the legislative halls of the freest people on earth? O, release to us our own, that we may protect ourselves, and we will bless you! If this old lady had died first, the laws would have protected her husband in appropriating the entire estate to his comfort or his *pleasure!* I asked a man, learned and experienced in jurisprudence by a half-century's discharge of the duties of legislator, administrator, guardian and probate judge, why the widow is denied absolute control of her third, there being no danger of creating "separate interests" when the husband is in his grave. He replied that it was to prevent a second husband from obtaining possession of the property of a first, to the defrauding of his children, which would be the result if the widow married again. Here, the law giving the control of the wife's earnings to the husband is made legal reason for cutting her off at his death with a pittance, so paltry, that, if too infirm to eke out a support by labor, she becomes a *pauper!* For if the law did not give the wife's earnings to the control and possession of a *first* husband, it would have no such excuse for

excluding the second husband, or for defrauding herself, and her children by a subsequent marriage, of her earnings in the estate of the first husband. But having legalized the husband's claim to the wife's earnings, by a law of universal application, our legislators have come to legislate for widows on the ground that they have *no property rights in the estates which have swallowed up their entire earnings!* They have come to give the preference of rights to the children of the husband; and sons, as well as daughters, are defrauded, legislated out of their interest in their mother's property. For, the estate not being divided when the wife dies, the earnings of a first wife are divided among the children of a second wife, to the prejudice of the children of the first wife. We ask for *equal* property rights, by the repeal of the laws which divert the earnings of the wife from *herself and her heirs.*

O men! in the enjoyment of well-secured property rights, you beautify your snug homesteads, and say within your hearts, "Here I may sit under my own vine and fig-tree; here have I made the home of my old age." And it never occurs to you that no such blissful feeling of security finds rest in the bosom of your wives. The wife of a small householder reflects that if her husband should be taken from her by death, that home must be divided, and a corner in the kitchen, a corner in the garret, and a "*privilege*" in the cellar, be set off to her *use*, and she called, in legal phrase, an "*incumbrance!*" (Great sensation.) Or if she chooses the alternative of renting her fractional accommodations, and removing to other quarters, her sweet home-associations — all that is left of her wedded love — are riven. The fireside that had been hallowed by family endearments, the chair vacant to other eyes, but to hers occupied by the loved husband still, all are desecrated by the law that drives her from the home which she had toiled and sacrificed to win for herself and loved ones, and she goes out to die under a vine and fig-tree strange to her affections; and, it may be, as in the case before mentioned, to find them wither away like Jonah's gourd, in absolute pauperism!

But I will tell you a story illustrating how women view these

things. It is not long since a gentleman of my acquaintance, who had often been heard to give his wife credit for having contributed equally to his success in laying up a property, was admonished by disease of the propriety of making a "will." He called his wife to him, and addressed her thus: "My dear, I have been thinking that the care of a third of my estate will be a burden to you, and that it will be better for you to have an annuity equal to your personal wants, and divide the rest among the children. The boys will supply you, if you should, from any unforeseen circumstance, need more. You can trust our boys to do what is right." "O yes, my dear," replied the wife, "we have excellent boys. You intrust to them the care of *your* business; and I could let them act as *my* agents in the care of my thirds. And I think, husband, that will be better. For there is this to be considered: We have other children, and differences obtain in their circumstances. You have seen these things, and, when one and another needed, you have opened your purse and given them help. When you are gone, there may still occur these opportunities for aiding them, and I should be glad to have it in my power to do as you have done. Besides, I have sometimes thought you had not done so well by the *girls*; and it would be very grateful to my feelings to make up the difference from my share of what our mutual efforts have accumulated."

Now, brothers, I appeal to you, whether you do not as much enjoy conferring benefits as receiving them? You have a wife whom you love. You present her with a dress, perhaps. And how rich you feel, that your love can give gifts! Women like to receive presents of dresses; I enjoy to have my husband give me dresses. (Laughter.) And women like to give presents to their husbands—a pair of slippers, or something of that sort. But they have no money of their own, and their thought is, "If I give my husband this, he will say to himself, It's of no account; it all comes out of my pocket in the end!" That is the feeling which rankles in the hearts of wives, whose provident husbands do not dream that they are not better content with gifts than their rights. We like, all of us, to give good gifts to those we love; but we do

not want our husbands to *give* us something to give back to them. We wish to feel, and have *them* feel, that our own good right hands have won for them the gift prompted by our affection; and that we are conferring, from our own resources, the same pleasure and happiness which they confer on us by benefits given. (Great cheering.)

But I had not exhausted the wrongs growing out of this alienation of the wife's right to her earnings. There is a law in Vermont — and I think it obtains in its leading features in most, if not all, the states of the Union — giving to the widow, whose husband dies childless (she may or may not be the mother of children by a former marriage), a certain portion of the estate, and the remaining portion to his heirs. Till the autumn of 1850, a Vermont widow, in such cases, had only one half the estate, however small; the other half was set off to her husband's heirs, if he had any; but, if he had none, the *state put it in its own treasury*, leaving the widow to a pauper's fate, unless her own energies could eke out a living by economy and hard toil! A worthy woman in the circle of my acquaintance, whose property at marriage paid for a homestead worth five hundred dollars, saw this law divide a half of it to the brothers and sisters of her husband at his death, and herself is left, in her old age, to subsist on the remaining half! In 1850, this law was so amended that the widow can have the whole property, if it be not more than one thousand dollars, and the half of any sum over that amount; the other half going to the husband's family; or, if he happen not to leave any fiftieth cousin Tom, Dick or Harry, in the Old World or the New, she may have it *all!* Our legislators tell us it is right to give the legal control of our earnings to the husband, because "in law" he is held responsible for our support, and is obliged to pay our debts (?), and *must have our earnings to do it with!* Ah, I answer, but why don't the state give us some security, then, for support during *our* life; or if it looses the husband from all obligation to see that we are supported after he is in his grave, why, like a just and shrewd business agent, does it not release to us the

“*consideration*” of that support- our earnings in the property which he leaves at his death ?

The law taking from the wife the control of her earnings is a fruitful source of divorces. To regain control of her earnings for the support of her children, many a woman feels compelled to sue for a *divorce*.

I am here in the hope that I can say something for the benefit of those who must suffer, because they cannot speak and show that they have wrongs to be redressed. It would ill become us, who are protected by love, or shielded by circumstances, to hold our peace while our sisters and their dependent children are mutilated in their hopes and their entire powers of existence, by wrongs against which we can protest till the legislators of the land shall hear and heed.

I was speaking of woman's self-created resources as necessary means for the discharge of her duties. Created free agents that we might render to God an acceptable and voluntary service, our Maker holds each human being accountable for the discharge of individual, personal responsibilities. Man, under his present disabilities, cannot come up to the full measure of his own responsibilities ; much less can he discharge his own and woman's too. Hence, in taking from woman any of the means which God has given her ability to acquire, he takes from her the means which God has given her for the discharge of her own duties, and thereby adds to the burthen of his own undischarged responsibilities. In taking from us our means of self-development, men expect us to discharge our duties, even as the Jews were expected to make brick without straw. If we are not fitted to be capable wives and mothers, — as contended by a gentleman on the stand yesterday, — if we make poor brick, it is because our brother man has stolen our straw. Give us back our straw, brothers, — there is plenty of it, — and we will make you *good* brick. Brick we must make — men say so ; then *give* us our straw, — we cannot *take* it. We are suffering ; the race is suffering from the ill-performance of our duties. We claim that man has proved himself incompetent to be the judge of our needs. His laws concerning our interests show that his intel-

ligence fails to prescribe means and conditions for the discharge of our duties. We are the best judges of the duties, as well as the qualifications, appropriate to our own department of labor; and should hold in our own hands, in our own right, means for acquiring the one and comprehending the other.

I have spoken of woman's legal disabilities as wife and mother; and adverted to the law which diverts from the wife the control of her own earnings, as a fruitful source of divorces. Increasing facilities for divorce are regarded by a majority of Christian men as significant of increasing immorality, and tending to weaken the sanctity of the marriage relation. But an examination of legislative proceedings will show that sympathy for suffering woman is the real source of these increasing facilities; and I am frank to say, that I consider man's growing consciousness of the wrongs to which wives and their helpless children are subject, by the laws which put it in the power of the husband and father to wrest from them the very necessaries of life, consuming their sole means of support,—the earnings of the mother,—as heralding a good time coming, when every woman, as well as every man, "may sit under her own vine." Let me illustrate by relating one, among many incidents of the kind, which have fallen under my observation.

In travelling, some eighteen years ago, across the Green Mountains from Albany, a gentleman requested my interest in behalf of a young woman, whose history he gave me before placing her under my care, as a fellow-passenger. Said he, She was born here; is an orphan and the mother of two young children, with no means of support but her earnings. She was a capable girl, and has been an irreproachable wife. From a love of the social glass, her husband in a few years became a drunkard and a brute; neglected his business, and expended their entire living. She struggled bravely, but in vain. At length, just before the birth of her youngest child, he pawned the clothing which she had provided for herself and babes, sold her only bed, and drove her into the streets to seek from charity aid in her hour of trial. After her recovery, she went to service, keeping her children with her. But he pursued her from place to place annoying her

employers, collecting her wages by process of law, and taking possession of every garment not on her own or children's persons. Under these circumstances, and by the help of friends who pitied her sorrows, she, with her hatless and shoeless children, was flying from their "*legal protector*," half clothed, to New Hampshire, where friends were waiting to give her employment in a factory, till a year's residence should enable her to procure a divorce! Now, friends, if under New York laws this poor woman had enjoyed legal control of her own earnings, she might have retained her first home, supported her children, and, happy as a mother, endured hopefully the burden of unrequited affection, instead of flying to New Hampshire to regain possession of her alienated property rights, by the aid of "divorce facilities."

But, alas! not yet have I exhausted that fountain of wrongs growing out of the alienation of the wife's property rights. It gives to children *criminals* for guardians, at the same time that it severs what God hath joined together—the mother and her child! By the laws of all these United States, the father is in all cases the legal guardian of the child, in preference to the mother; hence, in cases of divorce for the criminal conduct of the father, the children are confided, by the natural operation of the laws, to the guardianship of the criminal party. I have a friend who, not long since, procured a divorce from her husband,—a libertine and a drunkard,—and by the power of *law* he wrested from her their only child, a son of tender age. Think of this, fathers, mothers! It is a sad thing to sever the marriage relation when it has become a curse—a demoralizing (?) thing; but what is it to sever the relation between mother and child, when that relation is a blessing to both, and to society? What is it to commit the tender boy to the training of a drunken and licentious father? The state appoints guardians for children physically orphaned; and much more should it appoint guardians for children morally orphaned. When it uses its power to imprison and hang the *man*, it is surely responsible for the moral training of the *boy*! But to return. I have asked learned judges why the state decrees that the father should retain the children,

thus throwing upon the innocent mother the penalty which should fall upon the guilty party only? Say they, "It is because the father *has the property*; it would not be *just* (?) to burden the mother with the support of *his* children." O justice, how art thou perverted! Here, again, is the unrighteous alienation of the wife's earnings made the reason for robbing the suffering mother of all that is left to her of a miserable marriage — her children! I appeal to Christian men and women, who would preserve the marriage relation inviolate, by discouraging increased divorce facilities, if prevention of the necessity be not the better and more hopeful course, — prevention by releasing to the wife means for the independent discharge of her duties as a mother. And I appeal to all present, whether, sacred as they hold the marriage relation, Christian men have not proved to the world that there is a something regarded by them as even more sacred — the *loaf*! The most scrupulous piety cites Bible authority for severing the marriage tie; but when has piety or benevolence put forth its hand to divide to helpless and dependent woman an equal share of the estate which she has toiled for, suffered for, in behalf of her babes, as she would never have done for herself — only to be robbed of both? If the ground of the divorce be the *husband's* infidelity, the law allows him to retain the children and whole estate; it being left with the court to divide to the wife (in answer to her prayer to that effect) a pittance called alimony, to keep starvation at bay. If the babe at her breast is decreed to her from its helplessness, it is, at her request, formally laid before the court; and the court has no power even to decree a corresponding pittance for its support. The law leaves her one hope of bread for her old age which should not be forgotten — if *he dies first*, she is entitled to dower! But let the wife's infidelity be the ground of divorce, and the laws send her out into the world, childless, without alimony, and cut off from her right of dower; *and property which came by her remains his forever!* What a contrast! He, the brutal husband, sits in the criminal's bench to draw a premium, be rid of an incumbrance; for what cares he for the severing of a tie that had ceased to bind him to his wife, that

perhaps divided between him and a more coveted companion! If we *are the weaker sex*, O, give us, we pray you, equal protection with the stronger sex!

Now, my friends, you will bear me witness that I have said nothing about woman's right to vote or make laws. I have great respect for manhood. I wish to be able to continue to respect it. And when I listen to Fourth-of-July orations and the loud cannon, and reflect that these are tributes of admiration paid to our fathers because they compelled freedom for themselves and sons from the hand of oppression and power, I look forward with greater admiration on their sons who, in the good time coming, will have won for themselves the unappropriated glory of having given justice to the physically weak; to those who could not, if they would, and would not, if they could, *compel* it from the hands of fathers, brothers, husbands and sons! I labor in hope; for I have faith that when men come to value their own rights, as means of human happiness, rather than of paltry gain, they will feel themselves more honored in releasing than in retaining the "*inalienable rights*" of woman.

Brothers, you ask us to accept the protection of your LOVE, and the law says that is sufficient for us, whether it feeds or robs us of our bread. You admit that woman exceeds man in self-sacrificing love; her devotion to you has passed into a proverb. Yet, for all this, you refuse to intrust *your interests to her love*. You do not feel safe in *your interests* without the protection of equal laws. You refuse to trust even the mother's love with the interests of her children! How, then, do you ask of us—you, who will not trust your interests to the love of a mother, wife, daughter, or sister—why do you ask of us to dispense with the protection of equal laws, and accept instead the protection of man's affection?

I would offer, in conclusion, a few thoughts on education. I would say to my sisters, lest they be discouraged under existing disabilities from attempting it,—we can educate ourselves. It may be that you hesitate, from a supposed inferiority of intellect. Now, I have never troubled myself to establish woman's intellect-

ual equality. The inequality of educational facilities forbids us to sustain such a position by facts. But I have long since disposed of this question to my own satisfaction, and perhaps my conclusion will inspire you with confidence to attempt equal — I would hope *superior* — attainments, for man falls short of the intelligence within reach of his powers. We all believe that the Creator is both omniscient and omnipotent, wise and able to adapt means to the ends he had in view. We hold ourselves created to sustain certain relations as intelligent beings, and that God has endowed us with capabilities equal to the discharge of the duties involved in these relations. Now, let us survey woman's responsibilities within the narrowest sphere to which any common-sense man would limit her offices. As a mother, her powers mould and develop humanity, intellectual, moral and physical. Next to God, woman is the creator of the race as it is and as it shall be. I ask, then, Has God created woman man's inferior? If so, he has been false to his wisdom, false to his power, in creating an inferior being for a superior work! But if it be true, as all admit, that woman's *responsibilities* are equal to man's, I claim that God has endowed her with *equal powers* for their discharge.

And how shall we develop these powers? My sisters, for your encouragement, I will refer to my own experience in this matter. I claim to be self-educated. Beyond a single year's instruction in a high school for young men and women, I have enjoyed no public educational facilities but the common school which our Green Mountain state opens to all her sons and daughters. Prevented by circumstances from availing myself of the discipline of a classical school of the highest order, and nerved by faith in my ability to achieve equal attainments with my brother man, I resorted to books and the study of human nature, with direct reference to the practical application of my influence and my acquirements to my woman's work, — the development of the immortal spirit for the accomplishment of human destiny. And my own experience is, that the world in which we live and act, and by which we are impressed, is the best school for woman as well as man. Practical life furnishes the best discipline for our powers. It qualifies

us to take life as we find it, and leave it better than we found it. I have been accustomed to look within my own heart to learn the springs of human action. By it I have read woman, read man; and the result has been a fixed resolution, an indomitable courage to do with my might what my hands find to do for God and humanity. And in *doing*, I have best learned my ability to accomplish, my capacity to enjoy. In the light of experience, I would say to you, my sisters, the first thing is to apply ourselves to the intelligent discharge of present duties, diligently searching out and applying all knowledge that will qualify us for higher and extended usefulness. Be always *learners*, and don't forget to teach. As individuals, as mothers, we must first achieve a knowledge of the laws of our physical and mental organisms; for these are the material which we work upon and the instruments by which we work; and, to do our work well, we must understand and be able to apply both. Then we need to understand the tenure of our domestic and social relations, — the laws by which we are linked to our kind. But I cannot leave this subject without briefly calling your attention to another phase of education.

Early in life, my attention was called to examine the value of beauty and accomplishments as permanent grounds of affection. I could not believe that God had created so many homely women, and suffered all to lose their beauty in the very maturity of their powers, and yet made it our duty to spend our best efforts in trying to look pretty. We all desire to be loved; and can it be that we have no more lasting claims to admiration than that beauty and those accomplishments which serve us only in the spring-time of life? Surely our days of dancing and musical performance are soon over, when musical instruments of sweeter tone cry "*Mother.*" (Loud cheers.) What, then, shall we do for admiration when stricken in years? Has not God endowed us with some lasting hold upon the affections? My sisters, I can only find lasting charms in that thorough culture of the mind and heart which will enable us to win upon man's higher and better nature. If you have beauty and accomplishments, these address themselves to

man's lower nature — his passions; and when age has robbed you of the one, and him of the other, you are left unloved and unlovely! Cultivate, then, your powers of mind and heart, that you may become necessary to his better and undying sympathies. Aid him in all the earnest work of life; and secure his aid in your self-development for noble purposes, by impressing upon him that you are in earnest. Sell your jewelry, if need be, abate your expenditures for show; and appropriate your means, and time spent in idle visiting, to the culture of your souls. Then will his *soul* respond to your worth, and the ties that bind you endure through time, and make you companions in eternity!

Let the daughters be trained for their responsibilities; and though you may say, "We do not know whom they will marry, whether a lawyer, a doctor, or farmer," if you educate them for practical life, by giving them general useful knowledge, their husbands can teach them the details of their mutual business interests, as easily as the new responsibilities of maternity will teach them the ways and means of being qualified to discharge *its* duties.

Educate your daughters for practical life, and you have endowed them better than if you had given them fortunes. When a young girl of fourteen, I said to my father, Give me education, instead of a "setting out in the world," if you can give me but one. If I marry, and am poor in this world's goods, I can educate my children myself. If my husband should be unfortunate, the sheriff can take his goods; but no creditor can attach the capital invested here. [Touching her forehead.] (Loud cheers.) And, friends, my education has not been only *bread*, but an inexhaustible fund of enjoyment, in all the past of my life.

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